

AM  
1939  
or

Ortner, I. E.







BOSTON UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Thesis

CHORAL SPEAKING: OBJECTIVES, METHODS, AND USE IN THE TEACHING OF POETRY

By

Irene Elvira Ortner

(A.B., Atlantic Union College, 1934)

submitted in partial fulfilment of the

requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

1939





AM  
1939  
or

cbp.1

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER

PAGE

I. INTRODUCTION . . . . . 1

    Purpose and importance of course . . . . . 1

    Method of investigation . . . . . 1

    Definition . . . . . 2

    Work done by others . . . . . 2

II. WHAT IS MEANT BY CRITICAL APPRAISAL . . . . . 3

    by

    Artistic and social interpretation of poetry by a group . . . . . 3

First Reader . . . . .

    PROFESSOR OF English

III. VALUES AND APPRAISAL CRITERIA . . . . . 7

    Second Reader . . . . .

    PROFESSOR OF Literature

    Artistic . . . . .

    Educational . . . . .

    Speech Writing . . . . .

    Poetry interpretation . . . . .

IV. THE CRITICAL EVALUATION OF POETRY . . . . . 9

    Oral origin of poetry . . . . . 4

    Words are symbols of ideas and sounds . . . . . 7

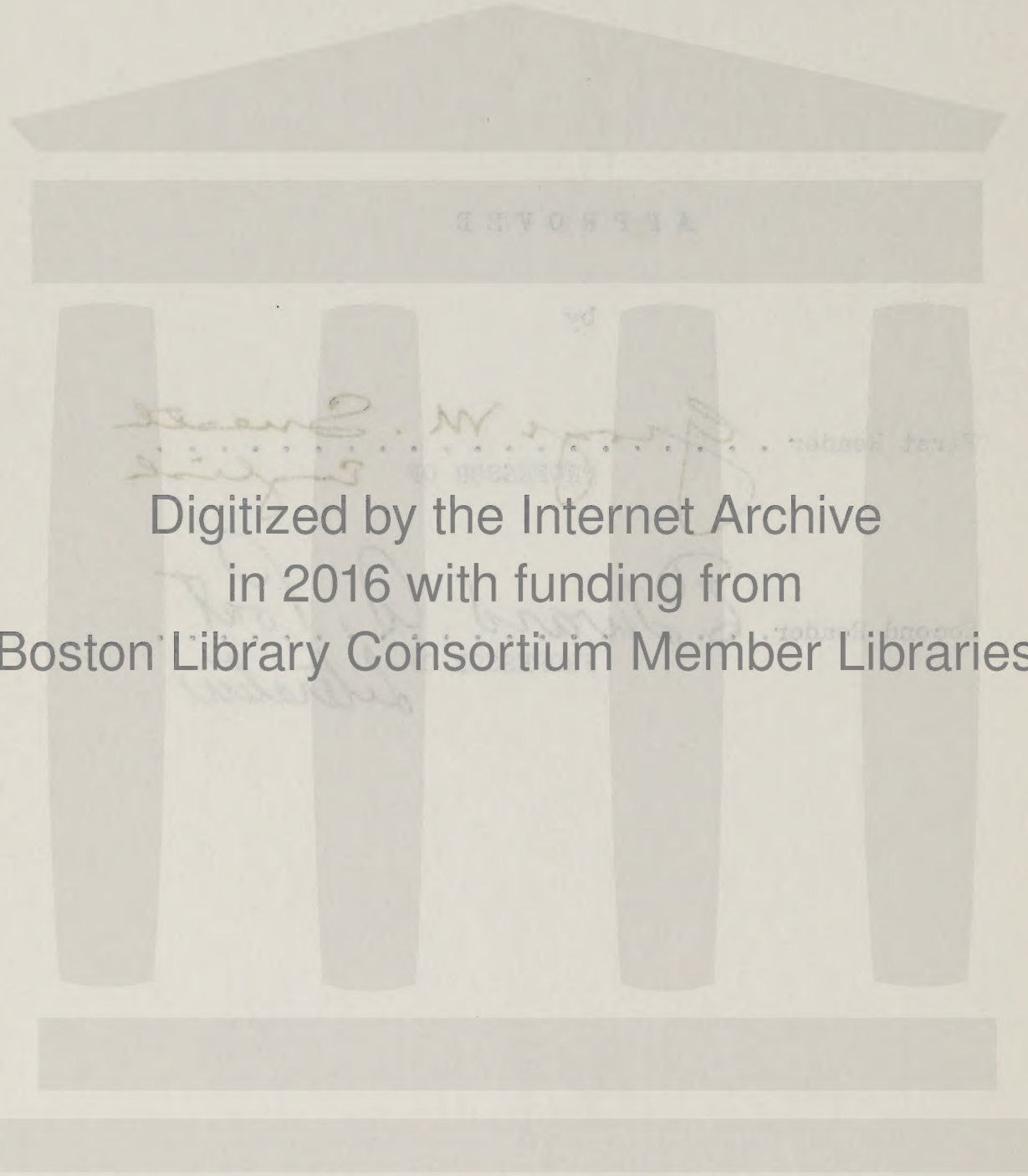
    Intellectual appeal of words through sound . . . . . 9

    Comparison of poetry and music . . . . . 10

V. THE POET AS A SOCIAL INSTRUMENT . . . . . 11

    Use of word and sound as instruments . . . . . 12





Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2016 with funding from  
Boston Library Consortium Member Libraries



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
	Purpose and importance of topic . . . . .	1
	Method of investigation . . . . .	1
	Delimitation . . . . .	2
	Work done by others . . . . .	2
II.	WHAT IS MEANT BY CHORAL VERSE SPEAKING . . . . .	3
	Artistic vocal interpretation of poetry by a group . .	3
	Not a revival of concert recitation . . . . .	3
	Based on fundamentals of good speech . . . . .	3
III.	VALUES AND AIMS OF CHORAL SPEAKING . . . . .	5
	Social . . . . .	5
	Artistic . . . . .	5
	Educational . . . . .	6
	Speech training . . . . .	6
	Poetry appreciation . . . . .	6
IV.	THE ORAL QUALITIES OF POETRY . . . . .	8
	Oral origin of poetry . . . . .	8
	Words are symbols of ideas and sounds . . . . .	8
	Emotional appeal of words through sound . . . . .	9
	Comparison of poetry and music . . . . .	10
V.	THE VOICE A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT . . . . .	12
	One of wood wind class of instruments . . . . .	12







Manner of producing vocal tone color . . . . .	12
Comparison of singing and speaking voices . . . . .	13
Necessity for training of speaking voice . . . . .	13
Feeling spirit of poem not sufficient . . . . .	13
Training to be based on natural speaking voice . . . . .	14
Fundamentals of good speech . . . . .	15
VI. HISTORY OF CHORAL SPEAKING . . . . .	16
Communal origin of poetry . . . . .	16
Five most frequent uses of choral ritual . . . . .	16
Relation to Gregorian Chant . . . . .	18
The chorus in early Greek drama . . . . .	18
Communal nature of medieval ballads . . . . .	19
Modern revival of group speaking fostered by poets . . . . .	19
William Butler Yeats . . . . .	19
Vachel Lindsay . . . . .	19
"A. E." . . . . .	19
John Masefield . . . . .	20
Gordon Bottomley . . . . .	20
T. S. Eliot . . . . .	21
First public performance of modern choral speaking . . . . .	20
Work of Marjorie Gullan . . . . .	20
Growth of movement . . . . .	21
Experimentation in the United States . . . . .	21
VII. THE MEMBERS OF A VERSE-SPEAKING CHOIR . . . . .	23
Qualifications for membership . . . . .	23
Number of members in group . . . . .	23



12	.....	Manner of producing vocal tone color
13	.....	Comparison of singing and speaking voices
13	.....	Necessity for training of speaking voice
13	.....	Feeling spirit of poem not sufficient
14	.....	Training to be based on natural speaking voice
15	.....	Fundamentals of good speech
16	.....	VI. HISTORY OF CHORAL SPEAKING
16	.....	Common origin of poetry
16	.....	Five good frequent uses of choral ritual
16	.....	Relation to Gregorian Chant
18	.....	The choros in early Greek drama
19	.....	Common nature of medieval cathedrals
19	.....	Modern revival of group speaking fostered by poets
19	.....	William Butler Yeats
19	.....	Vladimir Mayakovsky
19	.....	"A. E."
20	.....	John Keats
20	.....	Gordon Bottomley
21	.....	T. S. Eliot
20	.....	First public performance of modern choral speaking
20	.....	Work of Marjorie Gillian
21	.....	Growth of movement
21	.....	Organization in the United States
22	.....	VII. THE MEMBERS OF A VERSE-SPEAKING CHORUS
23	.....	Qualifications for membership
23	.....	Number of members in group



Types of voices . . . . .	24
Method of determining voice types . . . . .	25
VIII. THE DIRECTOR OF A VERSE CHOIR . . . . .	27
Qualifications . . . . .	27
Function of the director . . . . .	28
Suggested methods for directing . . . . .	28
IX. MATERIAL SUITABLE FOR USE BY A CHOIR . . . . .	30
Poetry with a traditional basis . . . . .	30
Communal and general point of view rather than personal . . . . .	30
Certain values to be considered in selecting material.	31
Poem chosen to be enjoyed by group . . . . .	31
Appropriateness . . . . .	32
Age and experience of group . . . . .	32
Interests of group . . . . .	32
Voice qualities of group . . . . .	32
Necessity for cutting long poems . . . . .	33
Must gain by being voiced . . . . .	34
Material may be selected from various types of literature . . . . .	34
The use of nonsense and nursery rhymes . . . . .	34
Narrative poetry a good choice . . . . .	34
Suggestions for ballad speaking . . . . .	35
Suggestions for the speaking of lyrics . . . . .	36
Additional comments on sonnet speaking . . . . .	38
Poetic drama and dramatic choruses . . . . .	38
Blank verse . . . . .	39



Types of voices . . . . .	24
Method of determining voice types . . . . .	25
VIII. THE CHOIR OF A VOICE CHOIR . . . . .	27
Qualifications . . . . .	27
Function of the director . . . . .	28
Suggested methods for directing . . . . .	28
IX. MATERIAL SUITABLE FOR USE BY A CHOIR . . . . .	30
Poetry with a traditional basis . . . . .	30
General and general point of view rather than personal . . . . .	30
Certain values to be considered in selecting material . . . . .	31
Poem chosen to be enjoyed by group . . . . .	31
Appropriateness . . . . .	32
Age and experience of group . . . . .	32
Interests of group . . . . .	32
Voice qualities of group . . . . .	32
Necessity for cutting long poems . . . . .	32
Must gain by being voiced . . . . .	34
Material may be selected from various types of literary works . . . . .	34
The use of consonance and nursery rhymes . . . . .	35
Narrative poetry a good choice . . . . .	34
Suggestions for ballad speaking . . . . .	35
Suggestions for the speaking of lyrics . . . . .	35
Additional comments on correct speaking . . . . .	35
Poetic drama and dramatic choruses . . . . .	35
Blank verse . . . . .	36



Biblical poetry and prose . . . . .	39
Poetic prose . . . . .	40
Contemporary poetry . . . . .	41
American verse for American choirs . . . . .	42
Free verse . . . . .	42
American Indian and negro poetry . . . . .	43
X. SUGGESTED PROCEDURE FOR THE CHORAL SPEAKING OF POETRY.	45
Good speech foundation . . . . .	45
Suggested material . . . . .	45
Poems selected by group . . . . .	46
Method of procedure . . . . .	46
Oral initial presentation of poem . . . . .	46
Group discussion of meaning . . . . .	46
In relation to author . . . . .	47
In relation to background of literary history.	47
Treatment of rhythm and rhyme . . . . .	48
Rhythmic response from children's choir . . . . .	49
Effect of imagination and understanding on the oral interpretation by the group . . . . .	50
Necessity for drill and practice . . . . .	51
Forms of presentation . . . . .	51
Refrain speaking . . . . .	52
Suggested material . . . . .	52
Antiphonal or two-part speaking . . . . .	53
Suggested material . . . . .	53
Line-a-person, part, or sequence speaking . . . . .	54
Types of material which may be used . . . . .	54







Illustration . . . . .	54
Unison speaking . . . . .	55
Suggestions about material . . . . .	56
Spoken descant . . . . .	56
Illustration . . . . .	57
XI. POETRY IN THE SCHOOL . . . . .	58
Reasons for students' dislike for poetry . . . . .	59
Taught too objectively . . . . .	59
Doubt as to meaning . . . . .	59
Dislike of enforced memory work . . . . .	60
Suggested ways of remedying dislike . . . . .	61
Emphasize poetry itself instead of its techniques. . . . .	61
Oral interpretation of poetry by the teacher . . . . .	61
Encourage and train students to read aloud . . . . .	61
Phases of appreciative understanding . . . . .	62
Suggestions for the effective teaching of poetry . . . . .	63
Introduction to new poem to be given in class . . . . .	63
Class discussion of meaning and poet's artistry . . . . .	63
Technical study of poem, if necessary . . . . .	63
A result of interest aroused by poem itself . . . . .	64
Important only if it aids in understanding of poem . . . . .	64
Possible use of oral reading to determine extent of student's understanding and appreciation of poetry . . . . .	65
XII. CHORAL SPEAKING AN AID IN THE TEACHING OF POETRY . . . . .	67
Qualifications for English teacher and choir director similar . . . . .	67







Love for poetry . . . . .	67
Ability to read poetry aloud . . . . .	67
Background of a knowledge of literary history . .	67
Same objectives . . . . .	68
Qualifications for choir membership and poetry students similar . . . . .	68
Speech training not prerequisite . . . . .	68
Some knowledge of poetry an advantage . . . . .	68
Choir and class have similar objectives for study . .	69
Enjoyment plus meaning . . . . .	69
Experiences of teachers who have used choral speaking . . . . .	69
Techniques of poetry subordinate to enjoyment . .	71
Poet's choice of words . . . . .	71
Forms of poetry . . . . .	71
Rhythm, rhyme, stanza patterns . . . . .	72
Literary background . . . . .	72
Ultimate aims of choir and English class similar . . .	72
Enriched cultural life . . . . .	72
Training for social and civic cooperation . .	73
Advantage over drama as educational force.	73
Helps to break down dislike of poetry . . . . .	74
Gives pleasant motivation for study about poetry .	74
Does away with "memory gems" . . . . .	74
Makes learning an active rather than passive process	75
Audiences experience awakened interest in poetry .	75
Public demonstrations result in a feeling of social approval . . . . .	75







XIII. CONCLUSION . . . . .	76
XIV. SUMMARY . . . . .	78
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	83
COMPREHENSIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY ON CHORAL SPEAKING . . . . .	86

growing interest in this new type of speech activity. Strangely, however, the development has been greater in Europe than in the United States and in the western section of our country than in the East.

The following pages attempt to give a clear idea of what choral speaking is; how the movement has developed and where it is now; how the work is carried on and with what results. Methods of teaching choral speaking in the class room have been investigated in an attempt to discover whether choral speaking can be used by the teacher to inject the meaning and beauty into the study of poetry, and study regarded with indifference or positive antagonism by many students. An apology will be made for investigating any movement which promises to cover the whole field of poetry for the boys and girls in our schools.

Since the ultimate aim of the teacher of literature is the development of the age of his students, and since the fundamental principles for the effective use of choral speaking are the same for all ages, this study is not restricted to any one age group. It offers some general suggestions which may be adapted to the individual student of any instructor. The valuable contribution of choral speaking to the training of an effective speaking voice and the forming of good speech habits is exposed at the start. The value in the



XIII. CONCLUSION . . . . .	78
XIV. SUMMARY . . . . .	78
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	83
COMPREHENSIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY ON CHORAL SPEAKING . . . . .	88



## I. INTRODUCTION

The years since 1922, when Miss Gullan presented the first verse-speaking choir to an audience in Scotland, have seen a steadily growing interest in this new type of speech activity. Strangely, however, its development has been greater in Europe than in the United States and in the western section of our country than in the East.

The following pages attempt to give a clear idea of what choral speaking is; how the movement has developed and upon what it is based; how the work is carried on and with what results. Methods of teaching poetry in the class room have been investigated in an attempt to discover whether choral speaking can be used by the teacher to inject new meaning and beauty into the study of poetry, --a study regarded with indifference or positive antagonism by many students. No apology need be made for investigating any endeavor which promises to renew and revivify the whole field of poetry for the boys and girls in our schools.

Since the ultimate aims of the teacher of literature are the same irrespective of the age of his students, and since the fundamental principles for the effective use of choral speaking are the same for all ages, this study is not restricted to any one age group. It deals with general suggestions which may be adapted to the individual problems of any instructor. The valuable contribution of choric speech to the training of an effective speaking voice and the forming of good speech habits is conceded at the start. Its value in the







teaching of poetry is the problem which is the chief concern of this thesis.

In a book published in 1936, Marguerite DeWitt wrote that "at present there is no detailed history or bibliography on choric work."<sup>1</sup> The following year, Cecile de Banke included in her book an excellent list of references.<sup>2</sup> However, this list was not entirely complete, the chief omission being the magazine articles and papers which have been published on the subject in recent years. Following the general bibliography for this thesis, there is to be found a comprehensive list of available material which deals specifically with choral speaking. It is my sincere hope that others interested in the work will find this compilation of value.

---

<sup>1</sup> De Witt, Marguerite E., and others, Practical Methods in Choral Speaking, footnote, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> The Art of Choral Speaking, pp. 211-13.

<sup>3</sup> De Witt, Marguerite E., and others, op. cit., p. 171.

<sup>4</sup> Greenleaf, M. A., A Guide to Divided Learning, p. 80.

<sup>5</sup> De Banke, op. cit., p. 173.

<sup>6</sup> Born, John Louis, "The Speech Chorus: An Exercise in General Esthetics," The English Journal, N. S. and Vol. Ed., III (June, 1930), p. 272.



teaching of poetry is the problem which is the chief concern of

this thesis.

In a book published in 1935, Marguerite DeWitt wrote that "at present there is no detailed history or bibliography on choral work."<sup>1</sup> The following year, Cecile de Bank included in her book and excellent list of references.<sup>2</sup> However, this list was not entirely complete, the chief omission being the magazine articles and papers which have been published on the subject in recent years. Following the general bibliography for this thesis, there is to be found a comprehensive list of available material which deals specifically with choral speaking. It is my sincere hope that others interested in the work will find this compilation of value.

---

<sup>1</sup> De Witt, Marguerite E., and others, Practical Methods in Choral Speaking, footnote, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> The Art of Choral Speaking, pp. 211-12.



## II. WHAT IS MEANT BY CHORAL VERSE SPEAKING

The expressions, "choral speaking," "choric speech," and "verse-speaking choir," are practically synonymous and are used interchangeably in referring to this type of activity, which several writers have defined in these words:

"Choral speech is an artistic form of expression of a group's interpretation of a piece of literature."<sup>1</sup> "A verse choir attempts, like a musical one, to 'perform' the poem by the studied unison of voices."<sup>2</sup> In choral speaking "we are establishing ourselves as nothing less than interpreters for the poets."<sup>3</sup> It is "an art form in the realm of speech."<sup>4</sup>

From these definitions it is evident that it is not a modern revival of the old-fashioned concert recitation for that was merely the parrot-like repetition of words without any thought as to interpretation. Neither is it the concerted recitation of "memory gems," for in choral speech work the memorization is practically automatic and thus a pleasant activity instead of a bore. Again, it does not aim at so-called "elocutionary" effects and artificial chanting which but obscure the meaning. It has as its basis the fundamentals of

---

<sup>1</sup> De Witt, Marguerite E., and others, op. cit., p. 177.

<sup>2</sup> Overstreet, H. A., A Guide to Civilized Loafing, p. 50.

<sup>3</sup> de Banke, op. cit., p. 179.

<sup>4</sup> Horn, John Louis, "The Speech Chorus: An Exercise in General Esthetics," The English Journal, H. S. and Col. Ed., XIX (June, 1930), p. 479.



## II. WHAT IS MEANT BY CHORAL VERSUS SPEAKING

The expressions, "choral speaking," "choral speech," and "choral speaking choir," are practically synonymous and are used interchangeably in referring to this type of activity, which several writers have defined in these words:

"Choral speech is an artistic form of expression of a group's interpretation of a piece of literature."<sup>1</sup> "A verse choir attempts to give a musical one, to 'perform' the poem by the studied union of voices."<sup>2</sup> In choral speaking "we are establishing ourselves as something less than interpreters for the poet."<sup>3</sup> It is "an art form in the realm of speech."<sup>4</sup>

From these definitions it is evident that it is not a modern revival of the old-fashioned concert recitation for that was merely the parrot-like repetition of words without any thought as to interpretation. Neither is it the concerted recitation of "memory gems," for in choral speech work the memorization is practically automatic and thus a pleasant activity instead of a bore. Again, it does not aim at so-called "eloquentary" effects and artificial chanting which but obscure the meaning. It has as its basis the fundamentals of

<sup>1</sup> De Witt, *Interpretation*, p. 177.

<sup>2</sup> *Interpretation*, p. 177.

<sup>3</sup> *De Witt*, *Interpretation*, p. 177.

<sup>4</sup> Horn, *John Lewis*, "The Speech Group: An Experiment in Interpretation," *The English Journal*, N. S. and Vol. 20, XIX (June, 1930), p. 178.



correct and effective speaking. "Voice control, sustained and directed breathing, exactness and nicety of enunciation, are requisite."<sup>5</sup> It is a cooperative activity, a combination of ideas of the members and conductor. Above all, it is an artistic effort on the part of a group to interpret poetry together.

Definitions at best are vague; the best realization of what a speech choir is capable of doing comes from actual observation of one in action and, better still, participation with a group. One American writer, after hearing a Sprechchor in Germany, records his impressions of it: "It is as if one were reading poetry very splendidly, indeed, bringing out the rhythm, the general flow, and, above all things, undertaking to create the mood of what is being presented."<sup>6</sup>

The following chapters will amplify what has been said here about the essence of choral speaking, and will give a clearer conception of what is meant by choral verse speaking.

---

<sup>5</sup> Gullan, Marjorie, and Percival Gurrey, Poetry Speaking for Children, Part I, p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 478.







### III. VALUES AND AIMS OF CHORAL SPEAKING

The benefits toward which choral speaking aims, may be considered under three classifications,--social, artistic, and educational. Any of the three may be the immediate objective but the others will be realized as by-products.

The verse choir does immeasurable good to the timid person who loves poetry but is too self-conscious to speak it alone. As one of a group he loses his timidity and gains a deep satisfaction in speaking the poetry and in joining in a cooperative way with a group in an artistic activity.<sup>1</sup> He gains confidence by being just one in a group and this confidence will carry over into other activities. This is recognized by psychologists who class it with country dancing and community singing as a valuable aid to social adjustment.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Harry Overstreet says:

To join with others in the rendering of a great poetic experience, as when, with a group one reads: 'I will lift up mine eyes to the hills whence cometh my strength'; or 'I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky'--this is to feel oneself swept into a oneness of life that is well worth the having.<sup>3</sup>

The artistic values are twofold. "We cannot join with others in speaking fine literature without incorporating within ourselves some of the greatness which belongs to it."<sup>4</sup> This is a lasting value

---

<sup>1</sup> Gullan, Marjorie, Choral Speaking, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> de Banke, Cecile, The Art of Choral Speaking, p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> A Guide to Civilized Loafing, p. 51.

<sup>4</sup> Gullan, op. cit., p. 3.







because even if the individual never speaks poetry again after leaving the choir, he will not forget the artistic experience in which he has shared.<sup>5</sup> Not only is the life of the participant enriched, but the choir brings to its hearers a new revelation of the beauty and meaning of the best poetry. "As a method of artistic expression it contains possibilities of renewing and vivifying the whole art of poetry."<sup>6</sup>

Educationally, choral speech may have as its objective either speech training or poetry appreciation. Miss Gullan feels that both are worth-while ends.<sup>7</sup> It provides a pleasant, enjoyable way of practicing correct speech habits and instilling an "attitude of respect, loyalty and reverence toward our beautiful English language," setting up as an objective an "American speech that is pleasing and agreeable, rather than harsh or strident, raucous or nasal."<sup>8</sup> Its advantage over regular speech classes is that a large number may benefit from the instruction at the same time thus effecting an economy of time and effort. In addition, it is something which young and old enjoy doing.

One of the most heart-warming effects of the work is the heightened love of poetry which is its result. It comes from keeping

---

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Bottomley, Gordon, quoted by Elizabeth E. Keppie, The Teaching of Choric Speech, p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Gullan, loc. cit.

<sup>8</sup> Meader, Emma Grant, Practical Methods in Choral Speaking, Marguerite De Witt and others, p. 114.







four artistic values in mind when speaking any kind of verse. Miss Gullan calls these values "the four M's."<sup>9</sup> They ~~are~~ the movement of the words, the music of the words, the meaning of the words, and the mood of the words. Approaching poetry via "the four M's" will give the student an insight into rhythm, rhyme, the poet's message, and the poet's mood,--a mastery of which will enrich any one's poetic background. "There is, in this distinctive technique of oral expression, a form of activity of unquestioned aid to those who are anxious to come into closer coincident thinking and feeling with the literary works whose particular message and mood students wish more thoroughly to understand."<sup>10</sup>

Miss Carrie Rasmussen, an experienced choral choir conductor, summarizes the manifold results of the work: "The children prize the verse which they have shared with one another, and which they have seen take on a new life and a new meaning. . . . They are thrilled with a new understanding and realization that poetry can be re-created into a living, pulsing thing, fairly running through their veins, and they ask for more and more."<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Gullan, Marjorie, and Percival Gurrey, Poetry Speaking for Children Part I, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas, Charles Swain, Introduction, de Banke, op. cit., p. 12.

<sup>11</sup> De Witt, Marguerite, and others, op. cit., p. 85.



four artistic values in mind when speaking any kind of verse. Miss  
 Collier calls these values "the four M's." They are the movement  
 of the words, the music of the words, the meaning of the words, and  
 the mood of the words. Approaching poetry via "the four M's" will  
 give the student an insight into rhythm, rhyme, the poet's message,  
 and the poet's mood.--a mastery of which will enrich any one's poetic  
 background. "There is, in this distinctive technique of oral ex-  
 pression, a form of activity of unquestioned aid to those who are  
 anxious to come into closer contact with thinking and feeling with the  
 literary works whose particular message and mood students wish more  
 thoroughly to understand."<sup>10</sup>

Miss Gertrude Ransome, an experienced director of her country,  
 summarizes the manifold results of the work: "The children prize  
 the verse which they have shared with one another, and which they  
 have seen take on a new life and a new meaning. . . . They are  
 thrilled with a new understanding and realization that poetry can be  
 re-created into a living, pulsing thing, fairly running through  
 their veins, and they ask for more and more."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Collier, Katherine, and Percival Gurney, Poetry Speaking for Children Part I, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas, Charles Swain, Introduction to Drama, pp. 115, p. 12.

<sup>11</sup> De Witt, Margarette, and others, Oral Story, p. 35.



#### IV. THE ORAL QUALITIES OF POETRY

Before examining the more technical aspects of choral speaking (such as the history of the movement and methods used), we shall briefly consider the essential nature of poetry in order to determine to what extent it lends itself to oral expression by a group of speakers. There is little reason for advocating a particular type of poetry activity if that activity does violence to the spirit of poetry.

Poetry had its beginning long before the days of printing. In its earlier forms it was kept alive largely by means of oral transmission from the poet to his hearers. Some of these early poems have been retained until the present time and are numbered among the world's truly great poems. Thus poetry was "a matter for the ear before ever printing made it a matter for the eye," showing that "part of the meaning and significance of a poem inheres in its sound."<sup>1</sup>

The written or printed words have come to convey a fairly accurate idea of meaning; in addition, they are the symbols of sounds. These symbols, "although originally received by the eye, . . . are handed over to the ear, are interpreted by the auditory sense, and take their final lodgement, not at all as conceptions of sight, but as conceptions of hearing."<sup>2</sup> This transfer of a sight impression into an auditory impression must accompany the silent reading of poetry or else part of the meaning and most of the emotional appeal will be

---

<sup>1</sup> Nichols, Wallace B., The Speaking of Poetry, p. vii.

<sup>2</sup> Lanier, Sidney, The Science of English Verse, p. 22.



#### IV. THE GRAMMATICAL QUALITIES OF POETRY

Before examining the more technical aspects of choral speaking

(such as the history of the movement and methods used), we shall

briefly consider the essential nature of poetry in order to deter-

mine to what extent it lends itself to oral expression by a group of

speakers. There is little reason for advocating a particular type

of poetry activity if that activity does violence to the spirit of

poetry.

Poetry had its beginning long before the days of printing. In

its earlier forms it was kept alive largely by means of oral trans-

mission from the poet to his hearers. Some of these early poems have

been retained until the present time and are numbered among the

world's truly great poems. This poetry was "a matter for the ear

before ever printing made it a matter for the eye," showing that

"part of the meaning and significance of a poem inheres in its sound."<sup>1</sup>

The written or printed word cannot convey a fairly accurate

idea of meaning; in addition, they are the symbols of sounds. These

symbols, "although originally received by the eye, . . . are turned

over to the ear, are interpreted by the auditory sense, and take

their final lodgment, not at all as conceptions of sight, but as

conceptions of hearing."<sup>2</sup> This transfer of a slight impression into

an auditory impression must accompany the silent reading of poetry

or else part of the meaning and most of the emotional appeal will be

<sup>1</sup> Monks, Wallace S., The Speaking of Poetry, p. vii.

<sup>2</sup> Lander, Sidney, The Science of English Verse, p. 22.



lost. If the poet has written skillfully, the "sense of his words will build up an intellectual harmony, and the sound of them will build up an instrumental harmony,"<sup>3</sup> both of which are essential to a real grasp of the poem.

Sound of words will have a meaning of its own in poetry, not to be given in any other way and the meaning that is ordinarily conveyed in the sound of words will prove capable of a subtle expansive reverberation, which seems to detach itself from the sound and go summoning images and feelings from remote regions of the mind to come and share its life.<sup>4</sup>

Unfortunately, most people are eye-minded when it comes to poetry; they get the meaning of the words but lose entirely the meaning inherent in the sound of the words, thus losing much of the poet's artistry as well. "There are, of course, experts who can read silently and yet hear all the tones and overtones of poetic composition, just as Beethoven could read the score of a symphony and hear in his mind every instrument in the orchestra, but these people are exceptional."<sup>5</sup> There is a difference in language that is heard and that which is imagined or thought. Both convey a thought but language heard has the added advantage of being able to appeal directly to the emotions, through its sensuous quality of sound, aside from its thought content.<sup>6</sup> "Poetry is a verbal legerdemain in which

---

<sup>3</sup> Abercrombie, Lascelles, The Theory of Poetry, p. 111.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 117.

<sup>5</sup> de Banke, Cecile, The Art of Choral Speaking, p. 25.

<sup>6</sup> Chilton, Eleanor Carroll, and Herbert Agar, The Garment of Praise: The Necessity of Poetry, p. 8.



lost. If the poet has written skillfully, the "sense of his words" will build up an intellectual harmony, and the sound of them will build up an instrumental harmony,<sup>5</sup> both of which are essential to a real grasp of the poem.

Sound of words will have a meaning of its own in poetry, not to be given in any other way and the meaning that is ordinarily conveyed in the sound of words will prove capable of a further expansive reverberation, which seems to detach itself from the sound and to summoning images and feelings from remote regions of the mind to come and share its life.<sup>6</sup>

Unfortunately, most people are over-claimed when it comes to poetry; they get the meaning of the words but lose entirely the meaning inherent in the sound of the words, thus losing much of the poet's artistry as well. "There are, of course, experts who can read silently and yet hear all the tones and overtones of poetic composition, just as Beethoven could read the score of a symphony and hear in his mind every instrument in the orchestra, but these people are exceptional."<sup>7</sup> There is a difference in language that is heard and that which is imagined or thought. Both convey a thought but language heard has the added advantage of being able to appeal directly to the emotions, through its sensuous quality of sound, aside from its thought content.<sup>8</sup> Poetry is a verbal technique in which

<sup>5</sup> Aristophanes, *Assemblymen*, The *Theory of Poetry*, p. 111.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.

<sup>7</sup> As Blake, *Celestial City*, The *Art of Choral Speaking*, p. 20.

<sup>8</sup> Collier, *Elements of Poetry*, and Herbert Allen, *The Elements of Poetry: The Necessity of Poetry*, p. 8.



the ear is quicker than the eye. The poem on the printed page is only half alive when it is not sounded; it needs all the oral values, every shade of music, every nuance of vowel and consonant."<sup>7</sup> "Mental hearing is never quite as good as actual hearing: the sound of poetry is always more impressive and expressive when it is actually sounding than when it is imaginary."<sup>8</sup>

Music and poetry are the two arts of sound. Both make use of rhythm, tune, and tone color. Their difference, stated scientifically, is the difference in the scale of tones used in music and that used by the human voice. The scale used by the human voice is far more flexible and complete than that used in the art of music, therefore is capable of greater expression.<sup>9</sup> Just as a musical score is a lifeless, inarticulate thing to all but the expert who transfers the black notes into mental music, "a poem is not truly a poem until it is voiced by an accomplished reader;"<sup>10</sup> it "does not exist until it is read aloud, any more than music exists until it is played."<sup>11</sup>

Dr. Overstreet comments on the fact that the enjoyment of poetry is rare; he feels that perhaps it is because most people do not know

---

<sup>7</sup> Untermeyer, Louis, and Carter Davidson, Poetry: Its Appreciation and Enjoyment, pp. 488-89.

<sup>8</sup> Abercrombie, op. cit., p. 153.

<sup>9</sup> Infra, Chapter V, "The Voice a Musical Instrument."

<sup>10</sup> Corson, Hiram, The Voice and Spiritual Education, p. 30.

<sup>11</sup> Chilton and Agar, op. cit., p. 8.







how to read poetry together. "It can be done," he says, "and in ways that add greatly to the beauty and power of what is read."<sup>12</sup> Choral speaking offers an opportunity not only of reading poetry aloud but of sharing this experience with others. This revival of interest in the choral reading of poetry is evidence that many people are beginning to realize that poetry is meant to be spoken; that it, like music, must be sounded in order to get the maximum pleasure from it.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> A Guide to Civilized Loafing, p. 49.

<sup>13</sup> Mills, Alice W., Practical Methods in Choral Speaking, Marguerite De Witt and others, p. 67.







## V. THE VOICE A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

A brief discussion of the manner in which the human voice functions will make the following chapters of more interest. If we think of a verse choir as an orchestra, poetry would correspond to the music and the voices would be the instruments.

The human voice is in reality a musical instrument of the wood-wind class. The vocal chords are the thin reeds whose vibrations cause the sound, and the mouth and throat are the tube through which the varying volume of air passes. An orchestral wood-wind instrument derives its tone color from the size and shape of the tube; vocal tone color is produced by changing the size and shape of the mouth in speaking the vowels and consonants. "For all purposes of verse, words are unquestionably musical sounds produced by a reed-instrument --the human voice."<sup>1</sup>

The human voice as a musical instrument is more versatile than any man-made instrument. Any one instrument in an orchestra has its own peculiar tone personality and each variation in pitch retains this individual tone-color. For example, a violin and piano retain their characteristic tone-color even though sounding exactly the same note. The human voice is capable of producing a large variety of tone-colors simply by changing the shape of the mouth and throat in

---

<sup>1</sup> Lanier, Sidney, The Science of English Verse, p. 49.



## V. THE VOICE A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

A brief discussion of the manner in which the human voice functions will make the following chapters of more interest. If we think of a voice choir as an orchestra, poetry would correspond to the music and the voices would be the instruments.

The human voice is in reality a musical instrument of the wood-

wind class. The vocal chords are the thin reeds whose vibrations cause the sound, and the mouth and throat are the tube through which the varying volume of air passes. An orchestral wood-wind instrument

derives its tone color from the size and shape of the tube; vocal tone color is produced by changing the size and shape of the mouth in speaking the vowels and consonants. "For all purposes of verse, words are unquestionably musical sounds produced by a vocal-instrument --the human voice."<sup>1</sup>

The human voice as a musical instrument is more versatile than any man-made instrument. Any one instrument in an orchestra has its own peculiar tone personality and each variation in pitch retains this individual tone-color. For example, a violin and piano retain their characteristic tone-color even though sounding exactly the same note. The human voice is capable of producing a large variety of tone-colors simply by changing the shape of the mouth and throat in

---

<sup>1</sup> Lanier, Sidney, The Science of English Verse, p. 43.



speaking the vowels and consonants which make up words. Printed words are but the notation indicating the tone-colors of the human speaking voice,--a notation which music lacks.<sup>2</sup>

The speaking voice is superior to the singing voice as a medium of expression, for while the average untrained singer has a range of from one to one and a quarter octaves, the speaking voice has a span of about three octaves.<sup>3</sup> Another advantage which the speaking voice has over the singing voice in expressing the complexities and delicacies of poetry is a greater variety of pitch. The semitone is the smallest interval used by the singing voice, but the speaking voice uses five--and perhaps more--gradations of pitch within each semitone.<sup>4</sup>

Proficiency in the use of the voice comes as the result of training and practice the same as proficiency in any other musical instrument. The speaker who attempts to give artistic vocal expression to a poem without proper training, even though he has made its message his own, is like a musician who knows his piece very well but whose instrument is out of tune.<sup>5</sup>

Some people feel that an individual will read well if he enters into the spirit of the poem and then reads naturally. This would be

---

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>3</sup> deBanke, Cecile, The Art of Choral Speaking, p. 43.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>5</sup> Corson, Hiram, The Voice and Spiritual Education, p. 10.



speaking the vowels and consonants which make up words. Printed words are not the notation indicating the tone-colors of the human speaking voice,--a notation which music lacks.<sup>2</sup>

The speaking voice is superior to the singing voice as a medium of expression, for while the average untrained singer has a range of from one to one and a quarter octaves, the speaking voice has a span of about three octaves.<sup>3</sup> Another advantage which the speaking voice has over the singing voice in expressing the complex-ities and delicacies of poetry is a greater variety of pitch. The semitone is the smallest interval used by the singing voice, but the speaking voice uses five-and perhaps more--gradations of pitch within each semitone.<sup>4</sup>

Proficiency in the use of the voice comes as the result of training and practice the same as proficiency in any other manual instrument. The speaker who attempts to give artistic vocal ex-pression to a poem without proper training, even though he has made his message his own, is like a musician who knows his piece very well but whose instrument is out of tune.<sup>5</sup>

Some people feel that an individual will read well if he enters into the spirit of the poem and then reads naturally. This would be

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>3</sup> DeBenedictis, Cecilia, The Art of Choral Speaking, p. 43.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>5</sup> Corydon, Hiram, The Voice and Spiritual Education, p. 10.



like telling a "clumsy, stiff-jointed clodhopper" that he will dance well if he enters into the spirit of the dance and then does it naturally. "The more he might enter into the spirit of the dance, the more he might emphasize his stiff-jointedness and his clodhopperishness."<sup>6</sup> If entering into the spirit of a poem and feeling its music personally insures an artistic oral reading of it, then the poets themselves would be the most proficient of interpreters, especially of their own verse, but some of the most musical of the poets were very poor readers. De Quincey said that Coleridge "had neither voice, nor management of voice"; Byron read in a sing-song; Poe is said to have been an uninteresting and monotonous reader. These men undoubtedly were sensitive to the melody in the verses they wrote but they lacked the necessary vocal training to give adequate oral expression. "A poet's organs of speech are as likely to be rigid and unmanageable as those of a boor, and in such case, no degree of imagination and feeling will render them flexible without special culture."<sup>7</sup>

Training must be based on the natural speaking habits, but the natural voice "needs added range, flexibility and power if it is to be able to convey the infinite varieties and subtleties which are inherent in fine poetry."<sup>8</sup> This does not mean that we must

. . . assume an ecclesiastical mode of delivery or a mournful and dirge-like voice, and it certainly does not require a melting tone of honied sweetness. But to read poetry well . . .

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp. 14-15.

<sup>7</sup> Corson, Hiram, An Essay on the Study of Literature and on Vocal Culture, pp. 33-35.

<sup>8</sup> Gullan, Marjorie, The Speech Choir, p. 11.



like telling a "story, stiff-jointed and ponderous" that he will dance well if he enters into the spirit of the dance and then does it naturally. "The more he might enter into the spirit of the dance, the more he might emphasize his stiff-jointedness and his stolid-hopiness." "If entering into the spirit of a poem and feeling its make personally insures an artistic oral reading of it, then the poets themselves would be the most proficient of interpreters, especially of their own verse, but some of the most musical of the poets were very poor readers. DeQuincy said that Coleridge "had neither voice, nor management of voice"; Byron read in a sing-song; Poe is said to have been an uninteresting and monotonous reader. These men undoubtedly were sensitive to the melody in the verses they wrote but they lacked the necessary vocal training to give adequate oral expression. "A poet's organs of speech are as likely to be rigid and unmanageable as those of a poor, and in such case, no degree of imagination and feeling will render them flexible without special culture."

Training must be based on the natural speaking habits, but the natural voice "needs added range, flexibility and power if it is to be able to convey the infinite varieties and subtleties which are inherent in fine poetry." This does not mean that we must

... assume an ecclesiastical mode of delivery or a mournful and dirge-like voice, and it certainly does not require a mellow tone of homely sweetness. But to read poetry well . . .

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp. 14-15.

<sup>7</sup> Corson, Speech, An Essay on the Study of Literature and on Vocal Culture, pp. 33-35.

<sup>8</sup> Giffan, Marjorie, The Speech Choir, p. 11.



necessitates the complete expression of the full meaning of the thought and emotion presented to us by the words--an expression, that is to say, not only of the thought, but also of the power or the delicacy, the vivacity or the tranquility, the gaiety or the solemnity, demanding by the poem.<sup>9</sup>

This expression of the thought and emotion demanded by the poem is based on the fundamentals of good speech. These are (1) how to breathe and control the breath; (2) accuracy of pronunciation of vowels and consonants; (3) resonance; (4) flexibility, volume, range of tone. A working knowledge of the techniques of speech plus the speaker's own "love and appreciation," and "the satisfaction and the joy of voicing, will enable him to communicate these values to his audience."<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Gullan, Margery, and Percival Gurrey, Poetry Speaking for Children, Part I, pp. 1-2.

<sup>10</sup> Keppie, Elizabeth, The Teaching of Choric Speech, p. 13.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Beginnings of Poetry, p. 101.

<sup>2</sup> De Banks, Cecile, The Art of Choral Speaking, pp. 18-19.



necessitates the complete expression of the full meaning of the thought and emotion presented to us by the words--an expression that is so easy, not only of the thought, but also of the power or the delivery, the vivacity or the tranquillity, the clarity or the solemnity, demanded by the poem.

This expression of the thought and emotion demanded by the poem

is based on the fundamentals of good speech. These are (1) how to

breathe and control the breath; (2) accuracy of pronunciation of vowels and consonants; (3) resonance; (4) flexibility, volume, range of tone. A working knowledge of the technique of speech plus the

speaker's own "love and appreciation," and "the satisfaction and the joy of voicing," will enable him to communicate these values to his audience.

---

3 Sullivan, Margery, and Percival Curvey, Speech Training for Children, Part I, pp. 1-2.

10 Kappie, Elizabeth, The Teaching of Whole Speech, p. 12.



## VI. HISTORY OF CHORAL SPEAKING

A study of the early beginnings of poetry reveals the interesting fact that it was a communal activity rather than the work of one person. Concerning the beginnings of poetry, Francis B. Gummere says:

Poetry, like music, is social; like its main factor, rhythm, it is the outcome of communal consent, a faculté d'ensemble; and this should be writ large over every treatise on poetry, in order to draw the mind of the reader from that warped and baffling habit which looks upon all poetry as a solitary performance. . . . "Making music" means in the primitive world performing, not listening,' a statement which applies as well to poetry.<sup>1</sup>

Not only was primitive poetry a communal thing but it was composed for oral use and was kept alive by its oral communication. It was often inspired by an emotion or need felt by the whole tribe, and thus became a communal expression. The five most frequent uses of a choral ritual were:<sup>2</sup>

1. To praise, propitiate, or supplicate the deity, the earliest recorded of which are the penitential psalms of the Chaldeans, the mantras of the Vedas, and a large number of the Hebrew psalms. A present-day survival is to be found in the litany of the Episcopal Church.

2. To incite warriors to valorous warfare, a survival of which is to be found among primitive people in South Africa and the Pacific Archipelagoes, and among the American Indians.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Beginnings of Poetry, p. 101.

<sup>2</sup> de Banke, Cecile, The Art of Choral Speaking, pp. 18-19.



## VI. HISTORY OF CHORAL SPEAKING

A study of the early beginnings of poetry reveals the interesting fact that it was a communal activity rather than the work of one person. Concerning the beginnings of poetry, Francis B. Gummere says:

Poetry, like music, is social; like the main factor, rhythm, it is the outcome of communal consent, a *collective phenomenon*; and this should be with large overtones of poetry, in order to draw the mind of the reader from that warped and baffling habit which looks upon all poetry as a solitary performance. . . . "Singing music" means in the primitive world something, not listening, a statement which applies as well to poetry.<sup>1</sup>

Not only was primitive poetry a communal thing but it was composed for oral use and was kept alive by its oral transmission. It was often inspired by an emotion or need felt by the whole tribe, and thus became a communal expression. The time most frequent use of a choral ritual was:<sup>2</sup>

1. To praise, prophesize, or supplicate the deity, the earliest recorded of which are the penitential psalms of the Old Testament, the hymns of the Vedas, and a large number of the Hebrew psalms. A present-day survival is to be found in the liturgy of the Anglican Church.

2. To inspire warriors to various exploits, a survival of which is to be found among primitive people in such Africa and the Pacific archipelagos, and among the American Indians.

<sup>1</sup> The Beginnings of Poetry, p. 101.

<sup>2</sup> See Burke, Gummere, The Art of Choral Speaking, pp. 18-19.



3. To celebrate victory in battle, an excellent example of which is the Song of Deborah.<sup>3</sup> Another Hebrew song which grew out of the common emotion of triumph was the song which the maidens sang when David returned from the slaughter of the Philistines.<sup>4</sup>

4. To taunt the vanquished, a similar survival of which is found among the Indian braves of the Southwest who taunt, not the vanquished in battle, but the bachelors of the tribe.

5. To lament the dead, of which perhaps the most perfect example is David's profound lament for Saul and Jonathon.<sup>5</sup>

One infers with great probability that death, and the resulting expression of communal grief in choral song and dance, had much more to do with earliest forms of poetry than even the erotic impulse. . . . The importance of the love-lyric, now overwhelming, and mainly an individual outburst, yields in primitive life to the importance of the choral vocero over a dead clansman.<sup>6</sup>

In Syria today is to be found an interesting survival of the lament over the dead for the rites and songs of mourning performed by the women over their dead are startlingly similar to the ones seen and heard by Jeremiah centuries ago.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Judges 5.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Samuel 18: 6-7.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Samuel 1:19-27.

<sup>6</sup> Gummere, op. cit., pp. 238-39.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 226.



3. To celebrate victory in battle, an excellent example of which is the song of Deborah.<sup>3</sup> Another Hebrew song which grew out of the common emotion of triumph was the song which the women sang when David returned from the slayer of the Philistines.<sup>4</sup>

4. To lament the vanquished, a similar survival of which is found among the Indian tribes of the Southwest who lament, not the vanquished in battle, but the husbands of the tribe.

5. To lament the dead, of which perhaps the most perfect example is David's profound lament for Saul and Jonathan.<sup>5</sup>

6. One infers with great probability that death, and the resulting expression of sorrowful grief in choral song and dance, had much more to do with earliest forms of poetry than even the erotic impulse. . . . The importance of the love-lyric, now overwhelming and mainly an individual outburst, yields in primitive life to the importance of the choral voe over a dead element.<sup>6</sup>

In Syria today is to be found an interesting survival of the lament over the dead for the rites and songs of mourning performed by the women over their dead are astonishingly similar to the ones seen and heard by Jeremiah centuries ago.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Judges 5.  
<sup>4</sup> I Samuel 18: 4-7.  
<sup>5</sup> I Samuel 1: 18-27.  
<sup>6</sup> Gummere, op. cit., pp. 238-39.  
<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 238.



The Gregorian Chant or Plain Song is a link in the chain connecting primitive forms of communal speaking with the modern revival of choric speech. One effect of the blending of many voices in speaking is the "prolongation of the continuative tone, which, under the influence of mass emotion and strongly accentuated rhythm, develops into something approximating to chant or recitative."<sup>8</sup> This effect was responsible for the chant which is so closely associated with the Christian church. The chant as heard in the church is not choral speaking, however, although they are related.

The beauty and distinction of the Greek drama at its best was the chorus,--a chorus not kept in the background and kept an incidental part of the development, but a very important part of the play. It was important enough to have two-thirds of the space in the theater for its action, and was supported by wealthy men as their tax to the state.<sup>9</sup> The earlier dramas were made up largely of reciting choruses; soloists were added later but the chorus retained an important place. Aeschylus, in "The Suppliants," had a chorus of fifty maidens as the chief actor. "Some portions of the play called for their speaking in unison, some portions called for part speaking, and some for antiphonal speaking. This chorus speaking gives us the source of modern choral verse speaking."<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> de Banke, op. cit., p. 19.

<sup>9</sup> Fogerty, Elsie, The Speaking of English Verse, pp. 98-99.

<sup>10</sup> Keppie, Elizabeth, The Teaching of Choric Speech, pp. 9-10.







Evidences of the communal spirit of poetry during medieval times are shown in the singing and dancing of the ballad. Minstrels, troubadours, and minnesingers traveled from place to place improvising their vigorous songs to fit the occasion and audience. The refrains were recited by the whole group and were often accompanied with a rhythmic bodily response.

The poets from earliest times have been writing verse intended for group rendition. This fact encourages the belief that for the centuries "when choral speaking, as an art, was lost to all but primitive, rustic, and monastic communities, there was a continuous, even if unconscious, attempt to restore it to the supreme position it held in the cultural life of ancient Greece."<sup>11</sup> Further contributing to this belief is the fact that the poets have been largely responsible for its modern revival.

Soon after the beginning of the twentieth century, William Butler Yeats and Vachel Lindsay experimented in an endeavor to find a suitable musical setting for the reading of poetry. Mr. Yeats solved the problem for himself by using an instrument--"half-psaltery, half-lyre"--that contained nearly all of the intervals of the speaking voice. He felt this accompaniment approached the beauty of the speaking voice attained by the ancients. Mr. Lindsay's solution was the adoption of a sustained chant-tone in the reading of his verse. About this same time "A. E." had a musician write a musical score recording as nearly as possible all the intonations of the voice.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> de Banke, op. cit., p. 20.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., pp. 20-21.







These attempts by the poets to utilize the beauties of the speaking voice were the initial step which led to the conscious attempt to produce a lovely voice quality with a group of speakers.

The first public demonstration by a group speaking poetry took place at the Glasgow Musical Festival, Scotland, in 1922. The group was directed by Miss Marjorie Gullan.<sup>13</sup> John Masefield was so well impressed with the possibilities of the work that he coined the name, "verse-speaking choir."<sup>14</sup> The same year he founded the Oxford Recitations which is a contest for adults speaking verse and is devoted to speech education and poetry speaking.<sup>15</sup> Miss Gullan continued her work and founded choirs in Scotland, Ireland, and finally in England, where the London Verse Speaking Choir was organized in 1925.<sup>16</sup> The same year also saw the publishing of the first book about choral speaking, Spoken Poetry in the School, written by Miss Gullan who remains an authority in the field.

Gordon Bottomley, "the greatest living authority on choral speaking,"<sup>17</sup> gave impetus to the movement by writing dramas in which a speaking chorus had a leading role and was not merely the commentator. His experiments with a group of speakers in a drama began as early as 1906; then in 1933, "on the occasion of the octo-centenary of the building of Exeter Cathedral, The Acts of Saint Peter, . . . a

---

<sup>13</sup> Gullan, Marjorie, Choral Speaking, pp. xi-xii.

<sup>14</sup> Keppie, op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>15</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>16</sup> Gullan, Marjorie, The Speech Choir, quoting Good Speech, April, 1935

<sup>17</sup> de Banke, op. cit., p. 21.



These attempts by the poets to utilize the resources of the speaking voice were the initial ones, which led to the conscious attempt to produce a novel voice quality with a group of speakers.

The first public demonstration by a group speaking poetry took

place at the Glasgow Festival, Scotland, in 1933. The group was directed by Miss Marjorie Bullen.<sup>12</sup> John Macfie was so well impressed with the possibilities of the work that he coined the name, "verse-speaking choir."<sup>13</sup> The same year he founded the Oxford

Associations which is a concert for adult speaking verse and is

devoted to speech education and poetry speaking.<sup>14</sup> Miss Bullen

continued her work and founded choirs in Scotland, Ireland, and

finally in England, where the London Verse Speaking Choir was

organized in 1933.<sup>15</sup> The same year also saw the publishing of the

first book about choirs speaking, Spoken Poetry in the School, written

by Miss Bullen who remains an authority in the field.

Gordon Bostwick, "The greatest living authority on choirs

singing,"<sup>16</sup> gave impetus to the movement by writing Voices in Verse

a speaking choir had a leading role and was not merely the commentator.

His experience with a group of speakers in a drama began as early

as 1906; then in 1923, "on the occasion of the one-hundredth of

the building of Exeter Cathedral, the Mass of Saint Peter, . . . a

<sup>12</sup> Bullen, Marjorie, Choir Speaking, pp. xi-xii.

<sup>13</sup> Bullen, Marjorie, op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>14</sup> Bullen, Marjorie, op. cit.

<sup>15</sup> Bullen, Marjorie, The Speech Choir, Spoken Poetry, March, 1933.

<sup>16</sup> The Herald, op. cit., p. 21.



modern Saint play with a band of speaking choristers, was performed before the rood screen in the nave of the great church."<sup>18</sup> The American poet, T. S. Eliot, used the same device in The Rock and Murder in the Cathedral.

The choral speaking movement, as initiated by Miss Gullan and sponsored by contemporary poets, spread rapidly to other parts of Europe, until fifteen years after its launching, it was estimated that there was "scarcely a community of any importance in the world where experimentation in choral speaking is not being given enthusiastic support."<sup>19</sup>

It seems strange that the United States was so slow to begin experimentation. Apparently the West had an earlier awakening to the values of choric speech than the East.<sup>20</sup> Early experimentation centered chiefly in colleges where choirs were under the direction of either the English professor or public speaking teacher. Among these pioneer attempts were those at the Iowa State University, Mount Holyoke College, Pennsylvania Women's College, and Wellesley College.<sup>21</sup> Since 1933 the interest has become more general and it is estimated that "every state now has at least one college where experimental work is being carried on."<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp. 22-23.

<sup>20</sup> De Witt, Marguerite, and others, Practical Methods in Choral Speaking, p. 8

<sup>21</sup> Loc. cit. (see p. 11 for names of people connected with movement in this country and the schools with which they are connected.)

<sup>22</sup> de Banke, op. cit., p. 23.



modern choir with a band of speaking chorists, was performed

before the road screen in the nave of the great church.<sup>18</sup> The

American poet, T. S. Eliot, used the same device in The Waste Land

and in the Cathedral.

The choral speaking movement, as initiated by Miss Gillen and

sponsored by contemporary poets, spread rapidly to other parts of

Europe, and fifteen years after its launching, it was noticed

that there was "scarcely a community of any importance in the world

where experimentation in choral speaking is not being given serious

critical support."<sup>19</sup>

It seems strange that the United States was so slow to begin

experimentation. Apparently the West had an earlier awakening to

the value of choral speech than the East.<sup>20</sup> Early experimentation

centered chiefly in colleges where choral were under the direction

of either the English professor or public speaking teacher. Among

these pioneer attempts were those at the Iowa State University, Mount

Holyoke College, Pennsylvania Women's College, and Wellesley College.<sup>21</sup>

Since 1933 the movement has become more general and it is estimated

that "every state now has at least one college where experimental

work is being carried on."<sup>22</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp. 22-23.

<sup>20</sup> De Witt, Choral Speech, and others, Practical Methods in Choral Speaking, p. 8.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 11. (For names of people connected with movement in this country and the schools with which they are connected.)

<sup>22</sup> De Witt, Choral Speech, p. 23.



In 1898 Sidney Lanier observed the beginning of an art of spoken recitation which endeavored to keep in mind the speech-tunes of the speaking voice. He believed that it was "an art in its infancy, which we may observe actually rising among us at the present day; and that it is destined to noble and beautiful extensions in the future."<sup>23</sup> If he could hear a modern, well-trained verse choir interpreting the meaning and mood of a poem by using the lovely tunes of the speaking voice, he would realize that his words written in 1898 were indeed prophetic.

---

<sup>23</sup> Lanier, Sidney, The Science of English Verse, p. 262.

<sup>1</sup> Guller, Marjorie, The Speech Choir, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Guller, Marjorie, Choral Speaking, pp. 7-8.

<sup>3</sup> The Art of Choral Speaking, pp. 345-41.



In 1898 Sidney Lanier observed the beginning of an art of spoken recitation which endeavored to keep in mind the speech-tunes of the speaking voice. He believed that it was "an art in the infancy, which we observe actually rising about us at the present day; and that it is destined to noble and beautiful extensions in the future."<sup>33</sup> If he could hear a modern, well-trained verse choir interesting the meaning and mood of a poem by using the lovely tones of the speaking voice, he would realize that his words written in 1898 were indeed prophetic.

---

<sup>33</sup> Lanier, Sidney, The Science of English Verse, p. 222.



## VII. THE MEMBERS OF A VERSE-SPEAKING CHOIR

Who are eligible for membership in a verse-speaking choir? "Any group of people who sincerely care for good poetry and who, believing that the bulk of good poetry was meant to be spoken and not to lie forever between the covers of books, are willing and eager to try to equip themselves to speak it."<sup>1</sup> The qualifications are, then, a love for poetry and a desire to learn to speak it effectively. If, in addition to these basic requirements, the members are acquainted with poetry and have had some training in good speech habits, the work will progress more rapidly. Those who have no present contact with poetry must be reintroduced to it. Where the work is used with students who are studying poetry, material may be selected which has been studied in class. If the members have had speech training, the techniques need only to be improved and applied to poetry speaking. Where there has been no previous training, a period of one and a half hours may be divided thus: twenty minutes in speech technique, twenty minutes of poetry discussion, and the rest of the time in practical drill in choral speaking.<sup>2</sup>

There is no arbitrary rule fixing the number of voices to use in a choir. Miss de Banke finds fifteen to be the most advantageous number, with the maximum about fifty.<sup>3</sup> The University of Berlin has over two hundred voices in its choir but it also works with a smaller

---

<sup>1</sup> Gullan, Marjorie, The Speech Choir, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Gullan, Marjorie, Choral Speaking, pp. 7-8.

<sup>3</sup> The Art of Choral Speaking, pp. 140-41.



## VII. THE MEMBERS OF A VERSE-SPEAKING CHOIR

Who are eligible for membership in a verse-speaking choir? Any group of people who sincerely care for good poetry and who, believing that the bulk of good poetry was meant to be spoken and not to lie forever between the covers of books, are willing and eager to try to equip themselves to speak it.<sup>1</sup> The qualifications are, then, a love for poetry and a desire to learn to speak it effectively. If, in addition to these basic requirements, the members are acquainted with poetry and have had some training in good speech habits, the work will progress more rapidly. Those who have no present contact with poetry must be reintroduced to it. Where the work is used with students who are studying poetry, material may be selected which has been studied in class. If the members have had speech training, the techniques need only to be improved and applied to poetry speaking. Where there has been no previous training, a period of one and a half hours may be divided thus: twenty minutes in speech techniques, twenty minutes of poetry discussion, and the rest of the time in practical drill in choral speaking.<sup>2</sup>

There is no arbitrary rule fixing the number of voices to use in a choir. Miss de Bank's finds fifteen to be the most advantageous number, with the maximum about fifty.<sup>3</sup> The University of Berlin has over two hundred voices in its choir but it also works with a smaller

<sup>1</sup> Guller, *Marjorie, The Speech Choir*, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Guller, *Marjorie, Choral Speaking*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>3</sup> *The Art of Choral Speaking*, pp. 140-41.



one of fifteen. Miss Swann feels that from fifteen to twenty-four makes the best choir, with twelve to thirty "possible, sometimes useful, and more often inevitable."<sup>4</sup> Miss Gullan agrees that the ideal choir should have not fewer than ten members, with eighteen to twenty the best number.<sup>5</sup> Large groups must be careful to work for "flowing neatness and intensity" rather than "tons of volume." The latter tends to degenerate into noise rather than tone. Voices do not pile up mathematically: ten voices are not ten times louder than one voice.<sup>6</sup> The group must strive for synchronization of initial attack and identical vowel and consonant sounds.

A large group may be broken up into smaller units to work independently of each other either on the same poem or on different ones. This method of working is recommended as a cure for a "stale" choir.<sup>7</sup> These smaller units, if sufficiently experienced, may perform certain types of poetry more appropriate for a small group than a large. This type of work corresponds to "chamber music" if we think of the larger group as an orchestra.<sup>8</sup>

Just as in the singing choir there are the high, low, and medium voices, the verse choir will have among its members those whose speaking voices cover the range from high to low. This voice timbre

---

<sup>4</sup> An Approach to Choral Speech, p. 16.

<sup>5</sup> The Speech Choir, p. 21.

<sup>6</sup> De Witt, Marguerite E., and others, Practical Methods in Choral Speaking, p. 29.

<sup>7</sup> Swann, op. cit., p. 72.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 16.



one of fifteen. Miss Swann feels that from fifteen to twenty-four makes the best choir, with twelve to thirty "possible, sometimes useful, and more often inevitable."<sup>4</sup> Miss Gulian agrees that the ideal choir should have not less than ten members, with fifteen to twenty the best number.<sup>5</sup> Large groups must be careful to work for "flaring resonance and intensity" rather than "tone of volume." The latter tends to degenerate into noise rather than tone. Voices do not rise up automatically; ten voices are not ten times louder than one voice.<sup>6</sup> The group must strive for synchronization of initial attack and identical vowel and consonant sounds.

A large group may be broken up into smaller units to work independently of each other either on the same poem or on different ones. This method of working is recommended as a cure for a "stale" choir.<sup>7</sup> These smaller units, if sufficiently experienced, may perform certain types of poetry more appropriate for a small group than a large. This type of work corresponds to "chamber music" if we think of the larger group as an orchestra.<sup>8</sup>

Just as in the singing choir there are the high, low, and median voices, the verse choir will have among its members those whose speaking voices cover the range from high to low. This voice timbre

<sup>4</sup> An Approach to Choral Speech, p. 18.

<sup>5</sup> The Speech Choir, p. 31.

<sup>6</sup> See Witt, Marguerite B., and others, Practical Methods in Choral Speaking, p. 23.

<sup>7</sup> Swann, op. cit., p. 72.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 18.



is the quality that gives to the voice what we might call its personality. These voice personalities must be recognized in arranging the members of a choir for effective work. In children, the differences will naturally not be as distinct as in a group of adolescents or adults. A choir of children can best be divided into light voices and medium or dark voices, or boys' voices against girls'. An older group may contain all men or all women but these may be divided into high, medium, and low. In a mixed group, the men's voices will show a variation and so will the women's. Since the men's voices will be heavier than the women's, it is best to have twice as many women as men in a well-balanced group.<sup>9</sup> The singing voice gives some indication of the pitch of the speaking voice.<sup>10</sup> It should not be the only guide, however. A better indication is to listen to the individual say a phrase which has a rise and fall of pitch in it, and from this judge the quality of the voice.<sup>11</sup>

The ideal choir has a blend of voices rather than a distinct difference in qualities. This makes for unison yet permits a variation or "up-and-downishness" in each individual voice in the group. Voices are grouped according to pitch, but "there should be much deviation in each voice from these average pitches."<sup>12</sup> It is

---

<sup>9</sup> de Banke, op. cit., p. 143.

<sup>10</sup> Gullan, op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>11</sup> loc. cit.

<sup>12</sup> Kaucher, Dorothy, Practical Methods in Choral Speaking, Marguerite E. De Witt and others, pp. 146-47.



is the quality that gives to the voice what we might call its personality. These voice personalities must be recognized in arranging the members of a choir for effective work. In children the differences will naturally not be as distinct as in a group of adolescents or adults. A choir of children can best be divided into

light voices and medium or dark voices, or boys' voices against girls'. An older group may contain all men or all women but these may be divided into high, medium, and low. In a mixed group, the men's voices will show a variation and so will the women's. Since

the men's voices will be heavier than the women's, it is best to have twice as many women as men in a well-balanced group.<sup>9</sup> The

singing voice gives some indication of the pitch of the speaking voice.<sup>10</sup> It should not be the only guide, however. A judged intonation is to listen to the individual say a phrase which has a rise

and fall of pitch in it, and from this judge the quality of the voice.<sup>11</sup>

The ideal choir has a blend of voices rather than a distinct

difference in qualities. This makes for union yet permits a variation or "up-and-downiness" in each individual voice in the group. Voices are grouped according to pitch, but there should be much variation in each voice from these average pitches.<sup>12</sup> It is

<sup>9</sup> de Banne, op. cit., p. 143.

<sup>10</sup> Galien, op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>11</sup> loc. cit.

<sup>12</sup> Kanner, Dorothy, Practical Methods in Church Singing, Chapter 2, The first and second, pp. 143-57.



this variation plus unison which gives the verse-speaking choir its beautiful tonal effects.

---

\_\_\_\_\_ of a group interested in the oral interpretation of poetry must not be lightly undertaken. Certain qualifications are important if the work is to be an educational and artistic success.

The director must, first of all, have a thorough knowledge of poetry,—its forms, its history, and its literary values. Without these he cannot direct the choir members in cultivating a discriminating taste for the best, nor can he lead the way to a thorough understanding of the poet's meaning and word. In addition to this knowledge he must himself have a deep and abiding love for that which he is endeavoring to visualize for the group.

He must also have a knowledge of speech training and be "ear" for poetic sound patterns,<sup>1</sup> so that he can help the group to appreciate the musical values of spoken verse. For this purpose, he must have flexibility, range and melody of tone, and must know how to bring out the values of the actual words without overemphasizing.<sup>2</sup> However, the leader must ever keep in mind that his function is to suggest and inspire but never must he allow himself to degenerate into a model to be followed arbitrarily. Choral speaking is a cooperative activity by a group not a number of people endeavoring to speak poetry just as the director does.

---

<sup>1</sup> Collan, Marjorie, Choral Speaking, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Collan, Marjorie, Spoken Poetry in the Schools, p. 61.



this variation gives union which gives the verse-speaking choir  
its beautiful tone effects.

---



## VIII. THE DIRECTOR OF A VERSE CHOIR

The direction of a group interested in the oral interpretation of poetry must not be lightly undertaken. Certain qualifications are important if the work is to be an educational and artistic success.

The director must, first of all, have a thorough knowledge of poetry,--its forms, its history, and its literary values. Without these he cannot direct the choir members in cultivating a discriminating taste for the best, nor can he lead the way to a thorough understanding of the poet's meaning and mood. In addition to this knowledge he must himself have a deep and abiding love for that which he is endeavoring to vitalize for the group.

He must also have a knowledge of speech training and an "ear for poetic sound pattern,"<sup>1</sup> so that he can help the group to appreciate the musical values of spoken verse. "For this purpose, he must have flexibility, range and melody of tone, and must know how to bring out the values of the actual words without overstressing."<sup>2</sup> However, the leader must ever keep in mind that his function is to suggest and inspire but never must he allow himself to degenerate into a model to be followed arbitrarily. Choral speaking is a cooperative activity by a group not a number of people endeavoring to speak poetry just as the director does.

---

<sup>1</sup> Gullan, Marjorie, Choral Speaking, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Gullan, Marjorie, Spoken Poetry in the Schools, p. 61.



### VIII. THE DIRECTOR OF A VERSE CHOIR

The director of a group interested in the oral interpretation of poetry must not be lightly undertaken. Certain qualifications are important if the work is to be an educational and artistic success.

The director must, first of all, have a thorough knowledge of poetry,--its forms, its history, and its literary values. Without these he cannot direct the choir members in achieving a discriminating taste for the best, nor can he lead the way to a thorough understanding of the poet's meaning and mood. In addition to this knowledge he must himself have a deep and abiding love for that which he is endeavoring to vitalize for the group.

He must also have a knowledge of speech training and an "ear" for poetic sound pattern,<sup>1</sup> so that he can help the group to appreciate the musical values of spoken verse. "For this purpose, he must have flexibility, range and melody of tone, and must know how to bring out the values of the actual words without oversteering."<sup>2</sup> However, the leader must ever keep in mind that his function is to suggest and inspire but never must he allow himself to degenerate into a model to be followed arbitrarily. Choral speaking is a cooperative activity by a group not a number of people undergoing to speak poetry just as the director does.

<sup>1</sup> Giffin, *Metrical, Choral Speaking*, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Giffin, *Metrical, Spoken Poetry in the Schools*, p. 61.



The conductor will find it necessary, especially during practice on new material, to use some method of keeping the individual voices together and to indicate variations in tempo and inflection, for choral speaking "is not 'a lot of people speaking at once' but an entity as controlled and unified and harmonized as is a choir of singers."<sup>3</sup> For public performances, some leaders prefer to direct; others train their choirs to perform with no director in front of them. All agree that the leader should be inconspicuous if seen at all, as his gestures add nothing at all to the hearers' appreciation but are merely for the benefit of the choir.

Whether he chooses to direct public performances or not, he will need a system which is graceful, easily understood, and simple for bringing about unity in the choir. There is no standard method of conducting. Miss de Banke suggests that "when strictly metric verse is being spoken the time beats used by the musical conductor will be the most advantageous," and cautions the director to "beat only the speaking accent in rhythmic poetry; [for] any attempt to impose the structural beat on the choir would be fatal."<sup>4</sup> Miss Swann suggests that the leader may either show the tempo, pause and beat, or these in addition to variety in pitch and inflection. Move the right hand in half a circle from left to right and from right to left horizontally to show the line change; that is, from left to right for the first line, and from right to left for the second line.

---

<sup>3</sup> Swann, Mona, An Approach to Choral Speech, p. 20.

<sup>4</sup> The Art of Choral Speaking, p. 153.







The shoulder muscles should be used in doing this. Show "pulse-beat" by a slight retraction or repression at the wrist. Pitch and inflection may be indicated by moving the hand up or down from the horizontal position. The left hand may be used to show additional pauses, stress, and in marking the entrance of other voices. All motions must be kept simple and free from rigidity.<sup>5</sup>

"Poetry, as heaven, has many mansions, and in each is a most individual householder, whose crochets have to be humored if complete accord between him and his guests is to be established and maintained, and verse-speakers, in some sort, are a poet's guests."<sup>6</sup> It is the choir director's privilege to introduce the guests to their hosts and to see that the visits are mutually helpful and agreeable.

---

<sup>5</sup> Swann, op. cit., pp. 22-24.

<sup>6</sup> Nichols, Wallace B., The Speaking of Poetry, p. 70.







## IX. MATERIAL SUITABLE FOR USE BY A CHOIR

Material to be used in choral speaking must be chosen carefully and with definite requisites in mind. The best kind for beginning work, and one type which is always appropriate, is that which has a traditional basis. In this class would come ballads with refrains; choruses from the Greek dramas; Old Testament passages which have responses; many of the Psalms. Other forms which may be used are those poems which have appeal and response, question and answer, dialogue, and those in which each stanza is a unit building up toward a cumulative effect. The point of view of the poem should be general and communal rather than personal and introspective.<sup>1</sup>

. . . personal thought and emotion cannot be expressed by a group; only poetry and prose that voices thought and feeling that is universal, racial and national, or the expression of some class or type--indeed that speaks for 'us' rather than for 'Me' or 'you'--comes within the bounds of suitability.<sup>2</sup>

This does not mean, however, that any material using the first person singular pronoun is inappropriate for group rendition. In many places in the Psalms, if not in all, the "I" is a communal expression of a closely united, emotional people rather than that of an individual. The Greek chorus as well as the leader used "I".<sup>3</sup> The poetry of Walt Whitman is another example of the universal ego. The same is true in the whole field of poetry. It is the spirit of the

---

<sup>1</sup> Gullan, Marjorie, Choral Speaking, pp. 13-14.

<sup>2</sup> Swann, Mona, An Approach to Choral Speech, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Gummere, Francis B., The Beginnings of Poetry, p. 186.







poem and not the poet's choice of pronouns that must indicate its appropriateness for group recitation.

Material for choral speaking should be selected for certain values such as melody, rhythm, prevailing emotion, contrasted moods or pictures, or climax and anticlimax. The following suggested poems will illustrate what is meant by these values: melody--"Spring" by Nash; rhythm--"Tarantella" by Hilaire Belloc; prevailing emotion--"Under the Greenwood Tree" by Shakespeare; contrasted moods and pictures--"Sands of Dee" by Kingsley; climax and anticlimax--"Cargoes" by Masfield and "The River" by Kingsley.<sup>4</sup> Poems to add to this list are found in any collection of British or American verse. These mentioned are particularly well adapted for group speaking and after a group has "experienced" one of them, they "will better understand what poetry is and will be more able to interpret (either silently or aloud and either alone or together) any poem that they are studying."<sup>5</sup>

Poetry should be read for pleasure. In her book, Discovering Poetry, Elizabeth Drew writes that "if after reading a poem several times as carefully and whole-heartedly as we can (aloud, for preference) it still does not 'suit the need of the moment,' and we have no sense of flying to Parnassus, put it by and try something else."<sup>6</sup> The same principle obtains in selecting material for a speaking choir. There will be no delightful results if the work is forced on the

---

<sup>4</sup> Burdsall, Marjorie E., Practical Methods in Choral Speaking, Marguerite E. De Witt and others, p. 182.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 182-83.

<sup>6</sup> p. 57.



poem and not the poet's choice of pronouns that must indicate its appropriateness for group recitation.

Material for choral speaking should be selected for certain values such as melody, rhythm, prevailing emotion, contrasted moods or pictures, or climax and anticlimax. The following suggested poems will illustrate what is meant by these values: melody--"Spring" by Keats; rhythm--"Tartarus" by Blake; prevailing emotion--"Under the Greenwood Tree" by Shakespeare; contrasted moods and pictures--"Sands of Dee" by Kingsley; climax and anticlimax--"Tartarus" by Keats; and "The River" by Kingsley.<sup>2</sup> Poems to add to this list are found in any collection of British or American verse. Those mentioned are particularly well adapted for group speaking and after a group has "experienced" one of them, they will better understand what poetry is and will be more able to interpret either silently or aloud and either alone or together) any poem that they are studying.

1913.

Poetry should be read for pleasure. In her book, Discovering Poetry, Elizabeth Brew writes that "if after reading a poem several times we carefully and whole-heartedly as we can (aloud, for preference) it still does not 'fill the mind of the moment,' and we have no sense of trying to learn it, but it is by and try something else."<sup>3</sup> The same principle obtains in selecting material for a speaking choir. There will be no delightful results if the work is forced on the

<sup>2</sup> Rudyard Kipling, Practical Methods in Choral Speaking, Macmillan Co., New York and London, 1913.

<sup>3</sup> ibid., p. 122-23.  
<sup>4</sup> ibid., p. 27.



members of the group and they do not like the poems used. It is a good plan for the conductor to present several poems of the same general type and let the group decide which one they prefer.

Appropriateness of the poem in relation to the age of the group and their background is essential if they are to appreciate the meaning enough to give it adequate vocal expression. It must be within their grasp emotionally as well as mentally. Elizabeth M. Jenks states three criteria of the appropriateness of a poem:

1. Strong and compelling rhythm.
2. Vivid and striking diction.
3. Variation and contrast in mood or thought or both.<sup>7</sup>

These three characteristics should be present in the material chosen whether it is for a group of children, high school students, or adults. A given poem may contain one quality to a greater extent than the other two, but the best material has some of each one.

"The poems suitable for junior high school add to the marked rhythm and effective diction, narrative and imaginative elements, which afford contrast in mood and thought. In poems for older students, the rhythm is frequently less obvious (but still insistent) while the beauty of language and the vividness of narrative are more impelling than in poems suitable for young children."<sup>8</sup>

Effective work is possible with a group made up of all male or all female voices. When the groups are either all women or all men, special care must be used in the choice of material which will appeal to the group and that will be best expressed by their individual voice tones. Men and boys like vigorous, rhythmic, virile poetry and

---

<sup>7</sup> Practical Methods in Choral Speaking, Marguerite E. De Witt and others, p. 159.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., pp. 159-60.







if given a chance to speak such verse, they will overcome the all-too-common feeling that love of poetry is a "sissy" thing. Among the many excellent selections for male voices are these: "Give a Rouse" by Browning; "Wanderer's Song" by Masfield; "Trafalgar" by Hardy; "Wind in the Pines" by Sarett; "The Congo", "Simon Legree", and "General William Booth Enters Heaven" by Lindsay; "Boots" by Kipling; "Marchin' Up", "Ghosts", and "Parade" by McChesney.<sup>9</sup> Women's and girls' choirs will do their best work with delicate, musical poems and narratives of home and family. The following are a few suggestions of poems which may be used with a girls' or women's group: "White Butterflies" by A. C. Swinburne; "Ariel's Song" by Shakespeare; "Silver" by Walter de la Mare; "Sampan" by Tao Lang Pee.

Many poems are too long for oral presentation but can be cut and used effectively in a shortened form. The traditional ballads often need to be cut, and it can be done without spoiling the thread of the story.

Caution must be exercised when using choruses from epic or dramatic poems for the choir must have as a background for these a thorough knowledge of the context. All material chosen must have a relation to the literary background of the group.<sup>10</sup>

A poem must pass the tests of being communal in spirit, having certain definite values, appealing to the group because of its

---

<sup>9</sup> Kaucher, Dorothy, Practical Methods in Choral Speaking, Marguerite E. De Witt and others, p. 147.

<sup>10</sup> Swann, op. cit., p. 14.







appropriateness, but the final test in choosing material "must always be whether the poem gains by being voiced chorally."<sup>11</sup>

Keeping in mind the criteria that distinguish suitable material, we find that the whole field of literature may be drawn upon for poems which may be used effectively. Practically every type of literature makes a contribution to this kind of work.

One class of poetry which is of great value to a verse speaking choir is that characterized by nonsense rhymes, tongue-twisters, and Mother Goose. These have an important place in the development of the voice qualities so necessary in the interpretation of more subtle poetry. This type of material furnishes good practice in enunciation, articulation, inflection, and breath control. In addition, it requires little mental exertion to memorize or understand it and yet it is bright and humorous. Mother Goose and nursery rhymes are especially appropriate for use with children, but young people and adults will enjoy them as beginning material and drill work. Faults may be corrected by interrupting regular poetry practice and using nonsense rhymes or Mother Goose which will correct the difficulty.<sup>12</sup>

Since everybody enjoys a story, narrative poetry has much to offer to the verse choir. In a narrative poem without any lyric quality, the story is the main thing. Pitch, pace, and tone change as the incidents and characters change. Many narrative poems have a lyric quality. In these "the general mood dominates the poem,

---

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>12</sup> Infra, pp. 45-46.



appropriateness, but the final test in choosing material "must

always be whether the poem wins by being voiced orally.<sup>11</sup>

Keeping in mind the criteria that distinguish suitable material,

we find that the whole field of literature may be drawn upon for

poems which may be used effectively. Practically every type of

literature makes a contribution to this kind of work.

One class of poetry which is of great value to a verse speaking

choir is that characterized by nonsense rhymes, tongue-twisters,

and Mother Goose. These have an important place in the development

of the voice qualities as necessary in the interpretation of more

subtle poetry. This type of material furnishes good practice in

enunciation, articulation, inflection, and breath control. In

addition, it requires little mental exertion to memorize or understand

it and yet it is bright and humorous. Mother Goose and nursery

rhymes are especially appropriate for use with children, but young

people and adults will enjoy them as beginning material and drill

work. Poems may be corrected by interrupting regular poetry practice

and using nonsense rhymes or Mother Goose which will correct the

difficulty.<sup>12</sup>

Since everybody enjoys a story, narrative poetry has much to

offer to the verse choir. In a narrative poem without any lyric

quality, the story is the main thing. Time, place, and some change

as the incidents and characters change. Many narrative poems have a

lyric quality. In these "the general mood dominates the poem."

<sup>11</sup> ibid., p. 47.

<sup>12</sup> ibid., pp. 55-56.



and yet we must preserve the interest in the story by changes which do not destroy the lyric quality, and yet are more marked than in those of the pure lyric."<sup>13</sup> In some poems the narrative style is more dramatic than lyric. For example, "Hiawatha" is a blending of the narrative and the lyric, whereas "The Pied Piper of Hamelin" is purely a story,--"one of the finest narrative poems in our language."<sup>14</sup> It needs to be read with variety and vividness, with a conscious working up to the climaxes.

The most delightful narrative poems for group speaking are the ballads, whose early forms were so closely associated with the communal spirit in poetry during the Middle Ages. They are excellent for beginning work because of their strict meter and their appeal to every age. Because they are so enjoyable, the beginner forgets his self-consciousness in the "strict rhythm and equal syllable quantity" which are "part of the rustic and effortless charm which informs the innermost spirit of this strange and lovely literature."<sup>15</sup> Miss Gullan (herself an Englishwoman) observes the difference in the ballads of Scotland, England, and Ireland: "Where Scotland is pawky and sly and England gay and hearty, Ireland is witty, delicate and reckless all in one."<sup>16</sup> This observation is a hint as to the way they should be spoken. The attack should be clean and clear-cut, and

---

<sup>13</sup> Gullan, Marjorie, Spoken Poetry in the School, pp. 72-73.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., pp. 69-70.

<sup>15</sup> de Banke, Cecile, The Art of Choral Speaking, p. 99.

<sup>16</sup> Gullan, op. cit., p. 79.



and yet we must preserve the interest in the story by changes which do not destroy the lyric quality, and yet are more varied than in those of the pure lyric.<sup>15</sup> In some poems the narrative style is more dramatic than lyric. For example, "Elisabeth" is a blending of the narrative and the lyric, whereas "The Pied Piper of Hamelin" is purely a story,--one of the finest narrative poems in our language.<sup>16</sup> It needs to be read with variety and vividness, with a conscious working up to the climax.

The most delightful narrative poems for group speaking are the ballads, whose early forms were so closely associated with the communal spirit in poetry during the Middle Ages. They are excellent for beginning work because of their strict meter and their appeal to every age. Because they are so enjoyable, the beginner forgets his self-consciousness in the "strict rhythm and equal syllable quantity" which are "part of the music and without which the poem is the innermost spirit of this strange and lovely literature."<sup>17</sup> Miss Gullun (herself an Englishwoman) considers the difference in the ballads of Scotland, England, and Ireland: "Where Scotland is heavy and staid and England gay and hearty, Ireland is witty, delicate and needless all in one."<sup>18</sup> This observation is a hint as to the way they should be spoken. The attack should be clean and clear-cut, and

<sup>15</sup> Gullun, *English, Scottish, and Irish Ballads*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 66-70.

<sup>17</sup> *See* Gullun, *English, Scottish, and Irish Ballads*, p. 33.

<sup>18</sup> Gullun, *op. cit.*, p. 79.



the speech kept resonant but simple.<sup>17</sup> The speakers should try to paint a verbal picture of what the author saw. Their prevailing mood should retain the essence of wonder and freshness of imagination by always keeping in mind the conditions under which the ballad originated and the kind of people responsible for its development. The refrain "should generally be kept at a lower pitch than the story and have very little inflection. It should have the effect of an undercurrent and be rather monotonous and very rhythmic if it is to throw up the light and shade of the verses it accompanies."<sup>18</sup>

The speaking of lyric verse must have a different approach than that used for narrative poetry, for "the lyric is, first and last, a song, and needs only the simplest form of delivery. Any attempt to underline it with the force and fervor of the drama is to destroy utterly its delicate beauty."<sup>19</sup> Avoid over-emphasis of the stressed syllables, a sudden change in vocal range, extremes in pitch, too much emotion in the voice, gestures, and a sing-song tone of voice.<sup>20</sup> In no other kind of poetry is it so essential for the speaker to be merely an "instrument through which the poem becomes vocal." He must understand the form and recognize the form as the "echo of its mood," for the music and emotion of a lyric are "twins."<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> Nichols, Wallace B., The Speaking of Poetry, p. 61.

<sup>18</sup> Gullan, op. cit., p. 87.

<sup>19</sup> de Banke, op. cit., pp. 92-93.

<sup>20</sup> loc. cit.

<sup>21</sup> Nichols, op. cit., p. 33.







The unison speaking of lyrics should be done sparingly in the classroom or for public programs especially with children.<sup>22</sup> When they are used with children it should be with the end in view of using them to help the children to speak with a realization of rhythm and mood. Their use with older groups can be more general, but even with these it should be kept in mind that "lyric speaking is for the most part like chamber music, too delicate and too intimate for auditorium work."<sup>23</sup>

"Vowel quality is the melody of verse and takes the place of great pitch-variety in the speaking of verse, particularly in lyric verse where it is pointed by assonance and rhyme."<sup>24</sup> The vocal quality to be used in speaking lyrics is more sustained than for other forms of speech; it comes nearer to the singing tones than for other kinds of verse.

The following procedure is suggested for the speaking of lyric verse:<sup>25</sup> First, read the poem quietly and in a monotone in order to learn its musical pattern without trying to understand it. Repeat this reading, for music is the chief value of the lyric. Then read it silently again this time trying to understand the poet's message. The first group practice should be in a whisper trying to convey the poet's message and emotion. Then practice aloud keeping in mind the suggestions of the preceding paragraphs and avoiding artificiality. The entire lyric should be practiced at the same time.

---

<sup>22</sup> Gullan, Marjorie, Spoken Poetry in the Schools, p. 11.

<sup>23</sup> Gullan, Marjorie, The Speech Choir, p. 261.

<sup>24</sup> Fogerty, Elsie, The Speaking of English Verse, p. 24.

<sup>25</sup> Nichols, op. cit., pp. 33-34.







For the groups attempting the speaking of sonnets the same suggestions apply as in lyric speaking in a general way. However, there are some further, and more specific, suggestions to be remembered when speaking sonnets.

The sonnet is a concentrated thing; it is that which differentiates it from a lyric. A sonnet is far more truly the monument of a moment than any lyric has ever been. . . . The speaker must indicate to the hearer that he is voicing some man's or some woman's inmost thought, or an emotion rounded to a thought, at the very moment when it is too unbearable to leave unexpressed. To that extent, every sonnet is dramatic, and should be spoken dramatically.<sup>26</sup>

The speaker must not only grasp the poet's emotion but keep in mind the sonnet form. It must be spoken in a more orderly manner than any other poem because the sonnet form is the most orderly of all poetic forms.<sup>27</sup> It is better to speak a sonnet in a quicker way than too slowly but in a brooding manner "as though the poet, phrase by phrase, but without the hesitation necessary in the actual and often torturing throes of composition, were hammering out his thought or his feeling in the full view of the listener."<sup>28</sup>

Choral speaking may be used with good effect in connection with poetic drama,--classical as well as contemporary. Selections from Milton's "Samson Agonistes" and Shelley's "Prometheus Unbound" are suitable for this work. However, in using cuttings and selections from dramatic poems, as well as other parts of longer selections,

---

<sup>26</sup> Nichols, op. cit., p. 50.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 59.







the speakers must realize the entire work and the relation of the part to the whole. Translations into English of a number of Greek plays are available and make excellent dramatic material for a speaking choir.<sup>29</sup> Contemporary authors have recognized the possibilities in the union of these two arts by writing dramas especially adapted for the verse choir. The choruses have an important place in T. S. Eliot's "Murder in the Cathedral" and Thomas Hardy's "The Dynasts" to mention only two from a large number.<sup>30</sup>

The fact that much of the grandest poetry has been written in blank verse need not discourage those who have a desire to voice it in groups. True, it does offer some difficulties to a speaking choir, but it can be read by those sufficiently experienced to be able to "preserve all the elasticity and variety . . . and yet never fail to make their hearers realize the underlying rhythm. The welding of sense and sound in this form of verse so that perfect harmony is the result, is perhaps the most difficult thing that can be asked of the speaker."<sup>31</sup> Rhymed verse needs to be experienced orally before blank verse is attempted, but the latter should not be ignored.

One of the finest sources of material for choral speaking is the Bible, especially the King James Version. The Bible contains the

---

<sup>29</sup> Baker's Plays Company, 178 Tremont Street, Boston, Mass.

<sup>30</sup> For suggestions as to choral verse dramas see bibliography of choral speaking material, pp. 86-89.

<sup>31</sup> Gullan, Marjorie, Spoken Poetry in the Schools, p. 75.



The speakers must realize the entire work and the relation of the part to the whole. Translations into English of a number of Greek plays are available and make excellent dramatic material for a speaking group.<sup>29</sup> Contemporary authors have recognized the possibilities in the union of these two arts by writing dramas especially adapted for and verse drama. The dramas have an important place in V. S. Field's "Drama in the Twentieth Century" and Thomas Hardy's "The Poet's Progress" no mention only two from a large number.<sup>30</sup>

The fact that much of the greatest poetry has been written in blank verse need not discourage those who have a desire to voice it in groups. True, it does offer some difficulties as a speaking whole, but it can be read by those sufficiently experienced to be able to "preserve all the elasticity and variety . . . and yet never fail to make their hearers realize the underlying rhythm. The weaving of sense and sound in this form of verse so that perfect harmony is the result, is perhaps the most difficult thing that can be asked of the speaker."<sup>31</sup> Rhythmic verse needs to be experienced orally before blank verse is accepted, but the latter should not be ignored.

One of the finest sources of material for choral speaking is the Bible, especially the King James Version. The Bible contains the

---

<sup>29</sup> Baker's Plays Company, 175 Belmont Street, Boston, Mass.  
<sup>30</sup> For suggestions as to choral verse drama see bibliography of choral speaking material, pp. 88-89.  
<sup>31</sup> Gifford, Marjorie, Choral Poetry in the Twentieth Century, p. 72.



poetry that is a fundamental part of our life--"the first which we learned; through the open windows of which we had our earliest vision of time, of space, of eternity, and of God. Its rhythms haunt our noblest prose; its lyrics are our most virile and enduring hymns." <sup>32</sup> The Psalms are the richest source of Biblical poetry appropriate for choral speaking, for their emotion is universal rather than individual. Other selections which are admirably suited to choral speaking are: Charity (1 Corinthians 13); "to everything there is a season" (Ecclesiastes 3:1-15); Peace (Micah 4:1-5); and many others.<sup>33</sup> The choric rendering of Biblical literature gives it a freshness of appeal for both speakers and hearers.

In addition to its poetry, the Bible also contains many fine passages of cadenced prose; "as an example of majestic sonorous balanced prose it stands alone and remains the supreme example in the language. Its influence on English literature and speech is boundless."<sup>34</sup> "The high classical quality of Bible selections and their ease of adaptation will do much to intrigue the group with choric prose."<sup>35</sup> Prose speaking is not work to be undertaken by beginners for it is more difficult than poetry speaking. Some prose selections may be spoken chorally, however, for it "may have tonal values or melody: may be inspirational: may make an emotional

---

<sup>32</sup> Smith, George Adam, The Early Poetry of Israel, Introduction, p.x.

<sup>33</sup> See Keppie, op. cit., p. 88, and Swann, op. cit., p. 82, for suitable Biblical selections for choral speaking.

<sup>34</sup> de Banke, op. cit., p. 110.

<sup>35</sup> Keppie, op. cit., p. 87.



poetry that is a fundamental part of our life--the first which we learned; through the open windows of which we had our earliest vision of time, of space, of eternity, and of God. Its rhythms meant our earliest prose; its lyrics are our most vital and enduring hymns." <sup>32</sup> The Psalms are the finest source of Biblical poetry appropriate for choral speaking, for their emotion is universal rather than individual. Other selections which are admirably suited to choral speaking are: "Charity" (I Corinthians 13); "to everything there is a season" (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8); "Peace" (Isaiah 41-5); and many others. <sup>33</sup> The choral rendering of Biblical literature gives it a freshness of appeal for both speakers and hearers.

In addition to its poetry, the Bible also contains many fine passages of unadorned prose; "as an example of majestic sonorous balanced prose it stands alone and remains the supreme example in the language. Its influence on English literature and speech is profound." <sup>34</sup> "The rich classical quality of Bible selections and their ease of adaptation will do much to bring the group with choral prose." <sup>35</sup> Prose speaking is not work to be undertaken by beginners for it is more difficult than poetry speaking. Some prose selections may be spoken solemnly, however, for it "may have formal value or melody; may be imaginatively; may make an emotional

<sup>32</sup> Smith, George Adam, The Early Poetry of Israel, Introduction, p. x.

<sup>33</sup> See Kopsie, op. cit., p. 88, and Smith, op. cit., p. 82, for suitable Biblical selections for choral speaking.

<sup>34</sup> de Banke, op. cit., p. 210.

<sup>35</sup> Kopsie, op. cit., p. 87.



appeal: and may also have a rhythm of its own."<sup>36</sup> As examples of Biblical prose which may be used by a choir, Miss de Banke suggests Genesis 1:1-31 and 2:1-3; The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12); and The Sower (Luke 8:5-15).<sup>37</sup> Cuttings from the prose writings of Thomas Carlyle, Thomas DeQuincey, Charles Lamb, and John Ruskin, and others, offer a challenge to an experienced group of speakers.<sup>38</sup> The speaking of prose is an effective way to counteract any sing-song tendencies in a choir. In planning a program by an advanced group, it is well to include some prose as it gives variety.

Does contemporary poetry contribute anything to the repertoire of a verse-speaking choir? Decidedly yes, for "there are a number of our modern contemporary poets who are writing verse, some of which is admirable for verse speaking."<sup>39</sup> It is well to use the poems of living authors, for they can tell those who attempt to interpret their poems wherein they are wrong and suggest their intention as a guide to the oral interpretation. Then, too, using poems of living authors helps to dispel--both for the readers and the hearers--the idea that a great poet must be a dead poet.<sup>40</sup> The poetry of today should be combined with the great poetry of yesterday for by itself it "can lay no foundation for poetic appreciation."<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>37</sup> See de Banke, op. cit., pp. 202-03, for suggested prose material.

<sup>38</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>39</sup> Keppie, op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>40</sup> Fogerty, op. cit., p. 98.

<sup>41</sup> Gullan, Marjorie, Practical Methods in Choral Speaking, Marguerite E. De Witt and others, p. 211.



appeal: and may also have a rhythm of its own.<sup>36</sup> As examples of  
 biblical prose which may be used by a choir, Miss de Banks suggests  
 Genesis 1:1-31 and 2:1-3; The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12); and The  
 Sower (Luke 8:1-15).<sup>37</sup> Cusick finds the prose writings of Thomas  
 Carlyle, Thomas DeQuincey, Charles Lamb, and John Ruskin, and others,  
 offer a challenge to an experienced group of speakers.<sup>38</sup> The  
 speaking of prose is an effective way to counteract any sing-song  
 tendencies in a choir. In planning a program by an advanced group,  
 it is well to include some prose as it gives variety.  
 Does contemporary poetry contribute anything to the repertoire  
 of a verse-speaking choir? Definitely yes, for "there are a number  
 of our modern contemporary poets who are writing verse, some of  
 which is adaptable for verse speaking."<sup>39</sup> It is well to use the  
 poems of living authors, for they can tell those who attempt to  
 interpret their poems wherein they are wrong and suggest their  
 intention as a guide to the oral interpretation. Then, too, using  
 poems of living authors helps to dislodge--both for the readers and  
 the hearers--the idea that a great poet must be a dead poet.<sup>40</sup> The  
 poetry of today should be combined with the great poetry of yesterday  
 for by itself it "can lay no foundation for poetic appreciation."<sup>41</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>37</sup> See de Banks, op. cit., pp. 803-04, for suggested prose material.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., op. cit.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., op. cit., p. 38.

<sup>41</sup> Ballen, Marguerite, Practical Methods in Choral Speaking, Marguerite  
 M. de Witt and others, p. 211.



The field of modern American verse is a particularly fertile one for the choirs of this country.

Starting with the rough-hewn free verse of Whitman, we find material suitable for choral presentation that can be used to trace every step of the revolution against the acceptance of the traditional rhythms and structures of the imported poetry of the old civilizations. In the latest expressions of the final emancipation there is choral speaking material which has never been equalled in suitability. The outstanding feature of modern American poetry, and the one having the most valuable innovation is its rhythms.<sup>42</sup>

The elements which contribute to the development of these new rhythms are Indian verse, negro verse, industrial life, and American democracy and settlement. "Such material, presented with artistry resulting from technical perfection, should go far to make the American speaking choir a national asset, not only in the work it has to offer to its own country, but in the possibility of introducing it to the other English-speaking countries of the world" for it represents the essence of these United States.<sup>43</sup>

However unconventionally a poem is arranged, its manner of speaking may be determined by reading it aloud. For example, some of the most peculiarly arranged poems are found to be sonnets when they are read aloud. The arrangement on the page is made to appeal to the eye rather than toward the satisfaction of the ear. Its sound must determine its suitability for oral expression and the way in which it is to be read; one must be "led by the inner emphasis implicit in sense and sound combined."<sup>44</sup> Speak free verse by giving

---

<sup>42</sup> de Banke, op. cit., p. 122.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., pp. 127-29.

<sup>44</sup> Chilton, Eleanor Carroll, and Herbert Agar, The Garment of Praise: The Necessity of Poetry, p. 377.



42 The field of modern American verse is a particularly fertile one

for the choice of this country.

Starting with the rough-hewn free verse of Whitman, we find material available for choice presented that can be used to trace every step of the evolution against the background of the traditional rhythms and structures of the imported poetry of the old civilizations. In the latest expressions of the final emancipation there is a new speaking material which has never been equalled in suitability. The outstanding feature of modern American poetry, and the one having the most valuable suggestion is its rhythm.<sup>42</sup>

The elements which contribute to the development of these new rhythms are Indian verse, negro verse, industrial life, and American democracy and sentiment. "Good material," presented with artistic resulting from technical perfection, should go far to make the American speaking choir a national asset, not only in the work it has to offer to its own country, but in the possibility of introducing it to the other English-speaking countries of the world" for it represents the essence of these United States.<sup>43</sup>

However unconventionally a poem is arranged, the manner of speaking may be determined by reading it aloud. For example, some of the most peculiarly arranged poems are found to be accurate when they are read aloud. The arrangement on the page is made to appeal to the eye rather than toward the satisfaction of the ear. Its sound must determine its suitability for oral expression and the way in which it is to be read; one must be "led by the inner emphasis implicit in sense and sound combined."<sup>44</sup> "Open free verse by giving

<sup>42</sup> de Baulx, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 127-28.

<sup>44</sup> Clifton, Eleanor, *op. cit.*, and Herbert, *op. cit.*, The *Language of Poetry*, p. 237.



the natural stresses their natural values and no other, and the rhythm should be then automatically apparent," always keeping in mind that the "unit in free verse is the whole paragraph--sometimes the whole poem. . . . Speak free verse, therefore, as naturally as possible; never impose a rhythm upon it; always disengage the rhythm out of it."<sup>45</sup>

The speakers of American verse should not overlook the rich possibilities in translations of native Indian verse and in negro poetry. The former is "the expression of a people whose declamation of emotion was and is almost entirely communal."<sup>46</sup> Most of their traditional verse belongs to their religious ceremonial rites. It does not express individual emotion but speaks for the whole tribe. "Indian poetry takes its rightful place with poetry that was, in its earliest stages, spoken communally."<sup>47</sup> Most negro verse is so closely associated with its lovely music that there is no advantage to be gained in speaking it. However, there are many poems with the negro rhythm and dialect which are suitable for choral speakers.<sup>48</sup> "'Go Down Death,' the funeral sermon on the death of old Aunt Caroline, is one of the most satisfying studies in choral reading for contrasts I have ever heard," writes Dorothy Kaucher. "It is a challenging combination of passages which are quietly conversational, pathetically intimate, and resonantly cosmic. When a group has woven all this

---

<sup>45</sup> Nichols, op. cit., p. 101.

<sup>46</sup> de Banke, op. cit., pp. 122-23.

<sup>47</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>48</sup> For suggested American Indian and negro material, see de Banke, op. cit., pp. 200-01.



the natural stresses their natural values and no other, and the rhythm should be then automatically apparent," always keeping in mind that the "unit in free verse is the whole paragraph--sometimes the whole poem. . . . Speak free verse, therefore, as naturally as possible; never impose a rhythm upon it; always disregard the rhythm out of it."<sup>45</sup>

The speakers of American verse should not overlook the rich possibilities in translations of native Indian verse and in negro poetry. The former is "the expression of a people whose declaration of emotion was and is almost entirely communal."<sup>46</sup> Most of their traditional verse belongs to their religious ceremonial rites. It does not express individual emotion but speaks for the whole tribe. "Indian poetry takes its rightful place with poetry that was, in its earliest stages, spoken communally."<sup>47</sup> Most negro verse is so closely associated with the lovely music that there is no advantage to be gained in speaking it. However, there are many poems with the negro rhythm and dialect which are suitable for choral speakers.<sup>48</sup> "The Down South," the funeral sermon on the death of old Aunt Caroline, is one of the most satisfying studies in choral reading for contrasts. "I have ever heard," writes Dorothy Kaseher, "it is a challenging combination of passages which are purely conversational, cathedrally intimate, and resolutely cosmic. When a group has woven all this

<sup>45</sup> Nichols, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

<sup>46</sup> de Saussure, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-23.

<sup>47</sup> *Idem*, *op. cit.*

<sup>48</sup> For suggested American Indian and negro material, see de Saussure, *op. cit.*, pp. 200-01.



into one 'vocal tapestry,' the members have learned more about emphasis through contrast and pause than any text book can teach abstractly."<sup>49</sup>

Truly, material for the speech choir is practically limitless. All times, all nations, all types have their peculiar contribution to make. It is for the choir members, with the wise direction of their leader, to choose those poems which have a personal appeal, which are within their emotional and mental grasp, and which, above all else, will gain by being voiced.

---

<sup>49</sup> Practical Methods in Choral Speaking, De Witt, Marguerite, and others, p. 145. "Go Down Death" is from God's Trombones, by James Weldon Johnson.

<sup>1</sup> Gullian, Marguerite, The Speech Choir, p. 242.

<sup>2</sup> Choral Speaking, pp. 12-26.

<sup>3</sup> The Art of Choral Speaking, pp. 21-46.



into one 'vocal tapestry,' the members have learned more about emphasis through contrast and pause than any text book can teach abstractly.<sup>48</sup>

Truly, material for the speech choir is practically limitless. All times, all nations, all types have their peculiar contribution to make. It is for the choir members, with the wise direction of their leader, to choose those poems which have a personal appeal, which are within their emotional and mental grasp, and which, above all else, will gain by being voiced.

---

<sup>48</sup> Practical Methods in Choral Speaking, by Miss Mary Alice, and others, p. 145. "Go Down Death" is from God's Promises, by James Wilson Johnson.



## X. SUGGESTED PROCEDURE FOR THE CHORAL SPEAKING OF POETRY

The appreciation of spoken poetry needs to be carefully thought about. Like chamber music, it must first grow among groups of students themselves, whose chief thought in practicing it is the love of poetry and the desire to study and speak it for what it has to give them and those with whom they share it, and not with the idea of public performances which will compete successfully with popular entertainments. Poetry will make its own way, but only on its own terms. . . . All of the best purposes in this realm of spoken English will be defeated if the participants let themselves be drawn into seeking merely the type of work and the kind of treatment of it which will 'get across' most easily and achieve popular success.<sup>1</sup>

To give the maximum amount of benefit, choral speaking must be based on training in correct speech technique. Simple exercises for regulating the supply and control of the breath, and developing the musical properties of the voice (intensity, duration, pitch, and quality) should be part of every practice period. Miss Gullan<sup>2</sup> and Miss de Banke<sup>3</sup> give a helpful series of exercises especially adapted for drill in these things. Almost any expression or public speaking text-book will give additional ones. However, this practice material need not detract from the enjoyment of the work. "Peter Piper" and other tongue-twisters, nonsense rhymes, and Mother Goose rhymes are good exercise material for both the children and older choir members for they do not tax the mind or memory and are humorous enough to be enjoyable. Many of the patter verses from Gilbert and

---

<sup>1</sup> Gullan, Marjorie, The Speech Choir, p. 262.

<sup>2</sup> Choral Speaking, pp. 19-28.

<sup>3</sup> The Art of Choral Speaking, pp. 31-46.







Sullivan operas may be used in the same way, especially for adults. There is little danger of stressing too much the value of nursery rhymes in this type of work. Children adore them and the older folk will like to say them, too. Since they require little concentration to get at the meaning, they are good material for practice in unity, inflection, and variety of pitch--the last named being especially lacking in adults. "All choirs tend to become heavy and dull, therefore light, gay, bright passages are decidedly useful as tuning-in exercises to be used momentarily at any time if tongue or spirits begin to lag."<sup>4</sup>

There are no hard and fast rules for the procedure of presenting a poem to a choral speaking group. There are certain basic principles, however. The whole endeavor must be a cooperative one, and this group cooperation should begin with the selection of the material. It is well for the conductor to have several poems of the same general type so that the group may choose which one they prefer, after hearing them read with understanding and appreciation by the leader and perhaps reading them silently for themselves, also.

After the poem has been chosen by the group, it needs to be studied for meaning, structure, and rhythm.

No choir should embark upon the speaking of a poem until the structure of its thought has been realized as a preliminary to its interpretation. . . . Sometimes the actual thought structure is so difficult to grasp that we have to read it over and over to understand it.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> De Witt, Marguerite, and others, Practical Methods in Choral Speaking, p. 36.

<sup>5</sup> Gullan, op. cit., p. 39.







The first objective is to find out what the poet is saying. Reduce it to every-day language and say it conversationally. Then say it as a group. Then have the group read the whole thing through silently to get the general idea of the theme and emotion. They will see the various beauties in it and each will be impressed by something different.<sup>6</sup> If the poem happens to be a narrative poem, the student's ability to summarize the story in a sentence or two tells more about his assimilation of the thought than a detailed, rambling account.<sup>7</sup>

Every poem should be studied as a revelation of the poet, as a work of art, and as a literary form. Some knowledge of the author and his place in the history of literature often adds depth to the perception. This material may be either required collateral reading, work already covered in literature classes, or talks by the instructor, depending upon the nature of the group.<sup>8</sup>

This emphasis on getting the meaning of a poem is not ill-considered for

. . . before the reader can render ideas as well as images, he must get the thought of the poem clear in his own mind. This grasp of content can be conveyed only by the correct pronunciation and clear enunciation of the words, by proper breathing so that the pauses aid the phrasing, by the inflections of vocal pitch to show questioning or exclamation, by changes in tempo and by emphases of volume upon the important ideas. . . The most important fact is this: if the reader does not have the

---

<sup>6</sup> de Banke, op. cit., pp. 89-90.

<sup>7</sup> Seely, Howard Francis, Enjoying Poetry in School, p. 82.

<sup>8</sup> de Banke, op. cit., p. 173.



The first objective is to find out what the poet is saying. Because it is every-day language and say it conversationally. Then say it as a group. Then have the group read the whole thing through silently so that the general idea of the theme and emotion. They will see the various elements in it and each will be interested by something different.<sup>6</sup> If the poem happens to be a narrative poem, the student's ability to summarize the story in a sentence or two tells more about his assimilation of the thought than a detailed, retelling account.<sup>7</sup>

Every poem should be studied as a revelation of the poet, as a work of art, and as a literary form. Some knowledge of the author and his place in the history of literature often adds depth to the perception. This material may be either repeated collectively paragraph, were already covered in literature classes, or taken by the instructor, depending upon the nature of the group.<sup>8</sup>

This emphasis on getting the meaning of a poem is not to be considered for

... before the reader can register ideas as well as images, he must get the thought of the poem clear in his own mind. This grasp of content can be achieved only by the nearest approximation and other consideration of the words, by proper wrestling so that the pattern and the meaning, by the influence of vocal pitch to show questioning or exclamation, by changes in tempo and by emphasis of volume upon the important ideas. . . . The most important fact is this: if the reader does not have the

<sup>6</sup> In *Reading, pp. 112-113*.

<sup>7</sup> See, *Reading, pp. 112-113*.

<sup>8</sup> In *Reading, pp. 112-113*.



meaning of the poem clearly in mind and the desire to communicate that meaning to another, all the training in pronunciation, breath-control, inflection, and gesture will be of little avail; if the ideas are firmly grasped, the other aids should come as a matter of course and taste.<sup>9</sup>

In all reading of poetry there are two things that must be revealed to the hearers: the intellectual content (meaning or message) and the emotional content or mood. This latter is usually done through the rhythm, rhyme, and the sound of the words.<sup>10</sup> The meaning and the rhythm must be woven together or the "speaking of poetry becomes a musical chant or a mechanical sing-song"<sup>11</sup> neither of which is countenanced in a reputable verse choir. Many a reader of poetry allows himself to become enslaved to the patterns and rhythms. He allows the rhythm and meter to dominate him instead of absorbing them and then giving himself to the interpretation of the content. "He forgets all meaning in the musical stress of the rhythm and stops dead at the end of each line. . . . A good rule for the interpreter to follow is to keep a conversational ideal always in mind; the metrical harmony will usually take care of itself."<sup>12</sup>

The speaking choir, to be fully equipped for the interpretative work lying before it, must be familiar with all types of rhythm from the most formal to the most free. It must be capable of presenting not only the rhythms of the past, but those of the present, and must even experiment with what may become the rhythms

---

<sup>9</sup> Untermeyer, Louis, and Carter Davidson, Poetry: Its Appreciation and Enjoyment, pp. 489-90.

<sup>10</sup> Raubicheck, Letitia, Teaching Speech in Secondary Schools, p. 93.

<sup>11</sup> Gullan, Marjorie, Spoken Poetry in the Schools, p. 22.

<sup>12</sup> Untermeyer and Davidson, op. cit., p. 490.



meaning of the poem clearly in mind and the desire to comprehend  
as we read meaning to another, all the meaning in pronunciation,  
presentation, inflection, and gesture will be at his disposal;  
if the ideas are firmly grasped, the other aids should come as  
a matter of course and taste.<sup>9</sup>

In all reading of poetry there are two things that must be  
revealed to the hearer: the intellectual content (meaning or  
message) and the emotional content or mood. This latter is usually  
tone through the rhythm, rhyme, and the sound of the words.<sup>10</sup>  
The meaning and the rhythm must be woven together or the "speaking  
of poetry becomes a musical chant or a mechanical staccato."<sup>11</sup>  
Neither of which is recommended in a reputable verse choir. Many  
a reader of poetry allows himself to become enslaved to the patterns  
and rhythms. He allows the rhythm and meter to dominate his instead  
of absorbing them and then giving himself to the interpretation of  
the content. "He forgets all meaning in the musical stress of the  
rhythm and trope band at the end of each line. . . . A good rule for  
the interpreter to follow is to keep a conversational ideal always  
in mind; the rhetorical harmony will usually take care of itself."<sup>12</sup>  
The speaking choir, to be fully equipped for the interpretative  
work lying before it, must be familiar with all types of rhythm  
from the most formal to the most free. It must be capable of  
presenting not only the rhythms of the past, but those of the  
present, and must even experiment with what may become the rhythm

<sup>9</sup> Interpreting, Leading, and Center Poets: The Interpretation  
and Enjoyment, pp. 482-50.

<sup>10</sup> Kandian, Loris, Teaching Speech in Secondary Schools, p. 53.

<sup>11</sup> Miller, Marjorie, Modern Poetry in the Schools, p. 22.

<sup>12</sup> Interpreting and Leading, op. cit., p. 490.



of the future. Its very flexibility, resulting from compounded units, makes it the perfect instrument for the demonstration of rhythms of pattern and rhythms of flowing cadence.<sup>13</sup>

Although the speaker must never be dominated by the rhyme, still "the poet's own use of rhyme must be the guide to the verse-speaker's own use of it, . . . Even when the poet . . . uses rhyme weakly, it is not negligible and should be given as much value as may be consistent with the paragraphic movement."<sup>14</sup>

With a group of children, the director's reading of the verse may be followed by a rhythmic response from the group such as finger tapping or clapping to the sense rhythm. "Lipping" the poem may be the next step for these younger ones; it is done by using exaggerated mouth movements with no audible sound. These two responses give them a feeling of the rhythm and the formation of the mouth for a clear enunciation of the words. Unfamiliar words should be explained, whatever the age of the group. With children, it is well to write these on the board, so that they may have a mental picture of them as well as the sound image. Older students and adults are usually given a printed copy of the poem that is being studied, but children will respond better if they have only the oral stimulus. After the lipping exercise, and when the meaning of the poem is clear, they are ready to begin the speaking of it.

---

<sup>13</sup> de Banke, op. cit., p. 106.

<sup>14</sup> Nichols, Wallace B., The Speaking of Poetry, p. 92.



of the future. Its very flexibility, resulting from condensed units, makes it the perfect instrument for the demonstration of rhythm of gesture and rhythm of living cadence.<sup>12</sup>

Although the speaker must never be dominated by the rhythm, still "the poet's own use of rhythm must be the guide to the verse-speaker's own use of it. . . . When the poet . . . uses rhythm wisely, it is not negligible and should be given as much value as may be

consistent with the paragraphic movement."<sup>13</sup>

With a group of children, the director's reading of the verse may be followed by a rhythmic response from the group such as finger tapping or clapping to the verse rhythm. "Clapping," the poem may be the next step for these younger ones; it is done by using exaggerated bodily movements with no audible sound. These two responses give them a feeling of the rhythm and the formation of the words for a clear enunciation of the words. Unfamiliar words should be explained, whatever the age of the group. With children, it is well to write these on the board, so that they may have a mental picture of them as well as the sound image. Older students and adults are usually given a printed copy of the poem that is being studied, but children will respond better if they have only the oral stimulus. After the rhythmic exercise, and when the meaning of the poem is clear, they are ready to begin the speaking of it.

<sup>12</sup> *de Bunko, op. cit.*, p. 108.

<sup>13</sup> Nichols, Wallace S., *The Speaking of Poetry*, p. 62.



If the poem has a refrain, they will speak that only at first, later taking turns giving the stanzas, or doing it by smaller groups. The tapping and lipping may be used with older groups at the discretion of the director.

When the members of the choir first attempt to speak the poem as a group, they will use the same simple, conversational tones which they used when they reduced it to every-day language to arrive at the meaning. They will soon feel the power and influence of the poet's language and, "moved by the emotion their imagination has conjured up, they will expand the range, they will widen the intervals, and they will change from the commonplace major scale to the harmonic-minor key."<sup>15</sup> After the group has worked together for a while they will develop such a strong sense of group feeling that even when they read a poem for the first time, there will be a noticeable unanimity in the phrasing and stress. The effect will be not of many different voices speaking together but of one many-colored voice.<sup>16</sup> This artistic result comes when the speakers are entirely subordinate to the poet.<sup>17</sup> Integrity of speech and tone, which is the only road to integrity of thought and feeling, --"the mark of fine art in literature as in other fields"-- is obtained only by thinking and feeling with "real sincerity, keen perception and intense imaginative power."<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> de Banke, op. cit., pp. 89-90.

<sup>16</sup> Mares, Delia Smith, Practical Methods in Choral Speaking, Marguerite De Witt and others, p. 175.

<sup>17</sup> Nichols, op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>18</sup> Gullan, Marjorie, The Speech Choir, p. 13.







As in any other kind of learning, effective choral speaking or poetry will necessitate practice and drill. Good results are obtained when the drill is made pleasant and satisfying to the group, by means of variety in the material and the pervading spirit of fun and relaxation which must be ever present. "Every true poem is a piece of articulate music, which an ordinary Imagination must long practice upon before it can play it with a sufficient degree of spontaneousness and unconsciousness, to derive from it all the pleasure it is capable of imparting."<sup>19</sup>

#### Forms of Presentation

All material for a verse-speaking choir is not adapted to reading in unison; in fact, there are other methods of presentation which should precede all-unison speaking. It is for the director and choir together to decide into what form of presentation a specific poem best fits. The one guide in deciding must be: How may we best express the poet's message and his artistry? Great care must be used not to break up a poem into unnatural divisions which will but obscure its beauty and meaning.

The chief methods used are included in the terms refrain, antiphonal, line-a-person or sequence, and unison. Work with a choir, whether of children or adults, should follow the same general order, beginning with refrain poems and not attempting unison work until the group have had experience with the other kinds.

A poem with a refrain is the very best material for beginning work. Of all refrain poems, perhaps the best are the many ballads with their stories of adventure and love and their compelling rhythms.

---

<sup>19</sup> Corson, Hiram, An Essay on the Study of Literature, p. 22.







A director will never go wrong in beginning with this type of work. They require a vigorous interest in the narrative part and perfect timing for the refrain. The aims in refrain speaking are accuracy of speech, perfect rhythms, ready refrain response, and assimilation of the mood.<sup>20</sup> To have smoothness in a ballad or other refrain poem each group should take their first breath during the last pulse of the other's lines. Both must live the poem while speaking it to give it unity.<sup>21</sup> Material adapted to refrain speaking is legion. Besides the ballads--both traditional and modern--are work songs with their vigorous refrains of hauling, tramping, rowing, and other motions. "Of particular trades and callings, perhaps sailors, oarsmen, and watermen generally, would furnish more refrains than could be found in any one industry of the land."<sup>22</sup> Men and boys in particular will find genuine delight in these vigorous work songs and sea chanteys.<sup>23</sup> Biblical poetry also provides a wealth of material for refrain speaking, especially in the Psalms. Among the many which may be used is Psalm 136. In speaking the constantly recurring refrain, "For His mercy endureth forever," "the choir should take the tone, pitch, and mood of the single speaker's voice, in a subdued manner, rising and falling, expressing quiet thankfulness,

---

<sup>20</sup> Keppie, Elizabeth, The Teaching of Choric Speech, p. 30.

<sup>21</sup> Swann, Mona, An Approach to Choral Speech, p. 32.

<sup>22</sup> Gummere, Francis B., The Beginnings of Poetry, pp. 272-73.

<sup>23</sup> Supra, p. 35-36, for comments on ballad speaking.







fierce exultation or solemn worship as the case may be."<sup>24</sup> Psalm 107 makes an interesting study for it has a double refrain which shows a contrast in feeling: "Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their distresses," and "Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men."

It is but a step from refrain speaking to antiphonal or two-part work. Students enjoy this type of work when it is alternate boy-and-girl speaking.<sup>25</sup> It achieves its effect by means of opposing groups, contrast in vocal quality, or contrasts in volume. Its material includes all poetry which involves question and answer, appeal and response, or poetic parallelism.<sup>26</sup> The best example of the latter is to be found in the Bible, especially in the Psalms and the prophetic books. The simpler Psalms may be used with children's groups, and many of them are especially effective when given by an older or adult choir. Appropriate selections for this treatment are: Isaiah 53, 1 Corinthians 13, Psalm 24. There are many others.

Poems of a large lyric utterance, the great elegies, the great odes or passages of narrative in long lines, lend themselves to unexpected varieties of treatment in the use of opposing bodies of divided sound, contrasts of vocal quality as between dark voices and light voices, and contrasts of loud and soft tone, of a beauty and surprise that are never surmised when we listen to a single voice.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Gullan, Marjorie, Spoken Poetry in the School, p. 97.

<sup>25</sup> De Witt, Marguerite, and others, Practical Methods in Choral Speaking, p. 170.

<sup>26</sup> Gullan, Marjorie, Choral Speaking, pp. 56-57.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., pp. x-xi, quoting Dr. Gordon Bottomley.







When the choir has had practice in the simpler types of presentation, they will enjoy doing a poem adapted to line-a-person, part, or sequence work. Many poems are best read by having various solo speakers or a number of small groups take certain lines or stanzas. Extreme care is necessary in choosing material to be given in this manner, for if it is not chosen very carefully the effect will be disjointed, distorted, and choppy. The rhyme, "The House That Jack Built," is a good illustration of the type of poem which may be broken up into parts. Biblical selections which may be used are Luke 11:8-17, Luke 10:30-35, and Psalm 137:1-6. Milton's "Samson Agonistes" contains short choruses which may be used. From "Occasions drew me early to this city" to the end of the poem may be given by two solo speakers and the whole choir. The following prayer to St. Catherine, the patron saint of spinsters, may be given with a delightfully whimsical effect by a choir of women:

St. Catherine, St. Catherine, oh lend me thine aid,  
 And grant that I never may die an old maid!  
 A Husband, St. Catherine!  
 A good one, St. Catherine!  
 But anyone better  
 Than no-one, St. Catherine!  
 A husband, St. Catherine!  
 Handsome, St. Catherine!  
 Rich, St. Catherine!  
 Young, St. Catherine!  
 Soon, St. Catherine!<sup>28</sup>

The first two lines are spoken by the entire group; each of the qualifications is voiced by a different solo voice with the entire group pleading, "Soon, St. Catherine!"

---

<sup>28</sup> Robinson, Marion Parsons, and Rozetta Lura Thurston, Poetry Arranged for the Speaking Choir, p. 347.



When the choir has had practice in the simpler types of presentation, they will enjoy doing a piece adapted to their own level, or composed work. Many poems are best read by having various solo speakers or a number of small groups take certain lines or stanzas. Extra care is necessary in choosing material to be given in this manner, for it is not chosen very carefully the effect will be disappointed, distorted, and cheap. The rhyme, "The House That Jack Built," is a good illustration of the type of poem which may be broken up into parts. Biblical selections which may be used are Luke 11:2-12, Luke 10:38-42, and Psalm 137:1-6. Milton's "Samson Agonistes" contains short passages which may be used. From "Excursions" draw as early as this story to the end of the poem may be given by two solo speakers and the whole choir. The following prayer for St. Catherine, the patron saint of spinners, may be given with a delightfully whimsical effect by a choir of women:

St. Catherine, St. Catherine, on loan we bring thee,  
 And grant that I never may die an old maid!  
 A husband, St. Catherine!  
 A good one, St. Catherine!  
 But none better  
 Than we-one, St. Catherine!  
 A husband, St. Catherine!  
 A husband, St. Catherine!  
 A husband, St. Catherine!  
 A husband, St. Catherine!  
 A husband, St. Catherine!  
 A husband, St. Catherine!  
 A husband, St. Catherine!  
 A husband, St. Catherine!

The first two lines are spoken by the entire group; each of the quadrants is voiced by a different solo voice with the entire group singing, "Good, St. Catherine!"



John Masfield's "Cargoes" makes an excellent part study with three groups participating. These groups may effectively composed of light voices for the first stanza, warm and darker for the second, and vigorous and metallic for the last. These voice qualities can best express the delicacy and culture of the first cargo; the dash, color, and bravado of the Elizabethans in the second stanza; the ugly utilitarianism of the third stanza.<sup>29</sup> This poem is excellent material for a speaking choir, for the author has skillfully woven a sound picture into each stanza which is often obscured by silent reading. In this, as in other poems which are given by several voices, every member of the group, whether silent or speaking, must keep the whole poem in his mind, "not casually as if the only really important part to him is his own passage, but with the utmost concentration, so that when he speaks he will fit perfectly into the theme as a whole."<sup>30</sup> Only in this way can the poem have unity.

Unison speech is the "grand result or climax of choral speaking."<sup>31</sup> It requires perfect phrasing, coordination in speech and tone values, nicety of pronunciation and pitch, finer interpretations, sincerity, and beautiful tone. These things do not come easily; they must be worked for. It is worth the effort, however, for "once accomplished it adds a wonderful new power to the one possessing it. Unison speech will then rank with music or other kindred arts."<sup>32</sup> The best

---

<sup>29</sup> Gullan, Marjorie, Choral Speaking, pp. 61-63.

<sup>30</sup> Gullan, Marjorie, The Speech Choir, p. 22.

<sup>31</sup> Keppie, op. cit., p. 53.

<sup>32</sup> Loc. cit.



John Keats's "Gargano" takes an excellent part study with three groups participating. These groups may effectively composed of light voices for the first stanza, warm and darker for the second, and vigorous and metallic for the last. These voice qualities can best express the beauty and culture of the first stanza; the death, color, and bravado of the second stanza; the only militarism of the third stanza.<sup>29</sup> This poem is excellent material for a speaking choir. For the author has skillfully woven a sound picture into each stanza which is often obscured by silent reading. In this, as in other poems which are given by several voices, every member of the group, whether silent or speaking, must keep the whole poem in his mind, "not casually as if the only really important part to him is his own passage, but with the utmost concentration, so that when he speaks he will fit perfectly into the theme as a whole."<sup>30</sup> Only in this way can the poem have unity.

Unison speech is the "grand result or climax of choral speaking."<sup>31</sup> It requires perfect phrasing, coordination in speech and tone values, unity of pronunciation and pitch, finer interpretations, sincerity, and beautiful tone. These things do not come easily; they must be worked for. It is worth the effort, however, for "once accomplished it adds a wonderful new power to the one possessing it. Unison speech will then rank with music or other blended arts."<sup>32</sup> The best

<sup>29</sup> Guller, *Metaphors, Choral Speaking*, pp. 61-62.

<sup>30</sup> Guller, *Metaphors, The Speech Choir*, p. 28.

<sup>31</sup> Kuyper, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*



material for unison speaking is to be found in "short poems with regular and compelling rhythms, fine melodies, simple themes, and a stanza pattern where the sense is complete as a rule in each line." <sup>33</sup>

"We are the music-makers," an ode by Arthur O' Shaughnessy, may be given by a group in unison, using the first three stanzas only.

Another good choice from English literature is Scott's "Breathes there a man with soul so dead," because of "the patriotic fervour of the theme, based on a primitive instinct with its universal appeal, and its direct simplicity."<sup>34</sup> Unison speaking must attain "accuracy of speech and emphasis, timing of attack and tempo, blending of pitch and inflection, and balancing of meaning and measures by the many speaking as one" if it is to be truly effective.<sup>35</sup>

There is one other form of choral speaking which is not included in the foregoing classifications because it is still somewhat of an experiment. This form of speaking makes use of spoken descants in much the same way that descants are used in musical compositions. It consists of "differentiation, through some special quality, of a voice or group of voices from an undercurrent of other voices speaking simultaneously with it."<sup>36</sup> One or several voices may speak against a background of voices or inflected speech may be used with a muffled monotone. The effect must be harmonious,

---

<sup>33</sup> Gullan, Marjorie, and Percival Gurrey, Poetry Speaking for Children Part II, p. 139.

<sup>34</sup> Gullan, Marjorie, Spoken Poetry in the Schools, p. 92.

<sup>35</sup> Keppie, op. cit., p. 38.

<sup>36</sup> Swann, op. cit., pp. 68-69.







and it should not be used just for an effect. Its only justification is to give a better expression to the meaning of the poem.

The following bit of Oriental verse will serve as an illustration of this type of speaking; part of the voices speak the words to a rhythmical descant, spoken in a muffled tone, of the words, "lap, lap."

Waves lap lap  
Fish fins clap clap  
Brown sails flap flap  
Chop-sticks tap tap.  
Up and down the long green river  
Ohè Ohè lanterns quiver  
Willow branches brush the river  
Ohè Ohè lanterns quiver.  
Waves lap lap  
Fish fins clap clap  
Brown sails flap flap  
Chop-sticks tap tap.<sup>37</sup>

The descant, spoken rhythmically and low, helps to give a sound picture of the little boat rocked in the gently lapping waves of the river.

---

<sup>37</sup> "Sampan" by Tao Lang Pee.

<sup>1</sup> Taggart, Hilda, *The Speaking of English Verse*, p. ix.

<sup>2</sup> See, Edward Francis, *Enjoying Poetry in School*, p. VII.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*







## XI. POETRY IN THE SCHOOL

There are a great many people who do not like poetry. School life and English classes have not opened to them the door of understanding and appreciation. "The majority of those who do not love poetry are the victims of bad teaching."<sup>1</sup> Teachers realize that there is something wrong somewhere for they know that there should be little inherent aversion to poetry by boys and girls. In fact, it would seem that "they should be reciprocally attractive. But they have not been. Boys and girls have denied themselves, or have been denied, a racial heritage, and, because of this denial, poetry too has paid a price."<sup>2</sup> Most teachers show little surprise when their pupils tell them that they "hate poetry"; they have come to expect it and are almost suspicious of one who confesses an enjoyment of it,--especially if he is a boy!<sup>3</sup> Experienced teachers of English acknowledge the difficulty of instilling a love of poetry in their pupils; teachers in training "recall their many unhappy experiences with poetry in high school and college. They wish to prevent their future pupils from feeling toward poetry as they once did; but just what to do is the problem that confronts and troubles them."<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Fogerty, Elsie, The Speaking of English Verse, p. ix.

<sup>2</sup> Seely, Howard Francis, Enjoying Poetry in School, p. VIII.

<sup>3</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. X-XI.



## XI. POETRY IN THE SCHOOL

There are a great many people who do not like poetry. School life and English classes have not opened to them the door of understanding and appreciation. "The majority of those who do not love poetry are the victims of bad teaching."<sup>1</sup> Teachers realize that there is something wrong somewhere for they know that there should be little interest aversion to poetry by boys and girls. In fact, it would seem that "they should be positively attracted. But they have not been. Boys and girls have denied themselves, or have been denied, a racial heritage, and, because of this denial, poetry has been said a crime."<sup>2</sup> Most teachers show little surprise when their pupils tell them that they "hate poetry"; they have come to expect it and are almost suspicious of one who confesses an enjoyment of it,--especially if he is a boy.<sup>3</sup> Experienced teachers of English acknowledge the difficulty of instilling a love of poetry in their pupils; sometimes in training "recall their many unhappy experiences with poetry in high school and college. They wish to prevent their future pupils from feeling toward poetry as they once did; but just what to do is the problem that confronts and troubles them."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Forster, *First, The Speaking of English Verse*, p. ix.

<sup>2</sup> Seeley, *Howard Crosby, Enjoying Poetry in School*, p. viii.

<sup>3</sup> *loc. cit.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. x-xi.



What is the reason for this dislike? One underlying cause for the lack of enjoyment of poetry is the method of spending a great deal of time teaching about poetry with a consequent lack of contact with poetry. Too many teach literature as history emphasizing technical composition, background, style, and the biography of the author.<sup>5</sup> These are useful as a foundation, but it is appreciation that is of lasting value. "We must not become so engrossed in the environs of poetry that we never reach its citadel. Our busy-ness about poetry, its makers, its history, its techniques, must never supplant our experiencing of it."<sup>6</sup> An experienced English professor, after observing the methods of various teachers, decided that teachers had become "pedagogically objective" to poetry. He writes:

Often it was almost as though poetry had been suspended by a cord from the ceiling of their classrooms or had been placed in a showcase in the middle of them. Poetry had become a curious and uninviting specimen. The teachers circled about it, pointing out certain features, indicating certain almost biological characteristics, asking questions about others, stipulating tasks to be performed on the cadaver by the pupils. The boys and girls followed them politely but passively, now and then noting anatomical peculiarities, occasionally asking half-hearted questions, or making equally half-hearted comments. Rather infrequently a mischievous fellow would stick out a metaphorical finger as though he were going to poke the thing to see if it would jump; he generally, however, was restrained by his teacher before he had perpetrated this vandalism.<sup>7</sup>

Another basis for students' dislike of poetry is the pernicious practice of forcing them "to read, memorize, and recite lines the

---

<sup>5</sup> Horn, John Louis, "The Speech Chorus: An Exercise in General Esthetics," The English Journal, H.S. and Col. Ed., XIX(June, 1930),p.480.

<sup>6</sup> Seely, op. cit., p. 27.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 13-14.







meaning of which they do not understand. . . . Every teacher has met boys and girls half through school who have memorized dozens of poems without the slightest idea of what the stanzas mean."<sup>8</sup> Both boys and girls especially hate to recite "memory gems." To memorize poetry for its mental training harks back to the outmoded "faculty psychology;" to force its memorization because of cultural benefits is practically useless for it will be soon forgotten. To make it a worth-while activity, the reasons must be the same as adults have for memorizing a particular passage,--because certain lines appeal to them particularly, and because they like short poems or parts of poems. It follows then that the teacher should "suggest instead of demand that pupils memorize lines of poetry," letting them choose their own selections with the teacher merely suggesting.<sup>9</sup>

It is apparent that if teachers are to instill in their students a love of poetry in addition to a knowledge of it, there must be a change in methods of teaching it. Since verse is one of the arts of sound,<sup>10</sup> it follows that poetry cannot be truly appreciated until it is voiced. Too many class lectures in the literature class are merely a retelling of material which the student could read for himself from a book. These lectures would be of more value if they conveyed something which could only be given by the voice. It is

---

<sup>8</sup> Stratton, Clarence, The Teaching of English in the High School, p. 57.

<sup>9</sup> Seely, op. cit., p. 212.

<sup>10</sup> Supra, p. 10.



meaning of which they do not understand. . . . Every human has  
 met boys and girls left through school who have memorized dozens  
 of poems without the slightest idea of what the stanzas mean.<sup>8</sup> Both  
 boys and girls especially hate to recite "memory verse." To memorize  
 poetry for its mental training works back to the outworn "frigid  
 psychology" to force the memorization because of cultural benefits  
 is practically useless for it will be soon forgotten. To make it a  
 worth-while activity, the reason must be the same as adults have  
 for memorizing a particular passage,--because certain lines appeal  
 to them particularly, and because they like short poems or parts of  
 poems. It follows then that the teacher should suggest instead of  
 demand that pupils memorize lines of poetry, "letting them choose  
 their own selections with the teacher merely suggesting."<sup>9</sup>

It is apparent that if teachers are to insist on their students  
 a love of poetry in addition to a knowledge of it, there must be a  
 change in methods of teaching it. Since verse is one of the arts  
 of sound,<sup>10</sup> it follows that poetry cannot be truly appreciated until  
 it is voiced. Too many fine lectures in the literature class are  
 nearly a retelling of material which the student could read for  
 himself from a book. These lectures would be of more value if they  
 conveyed something which could only be given by the voice. It is

<sup>8</sup> E. E. Schattschneider, The Teaching of English in the High School,  
 p. 57.

<sup>9</sup> ibid., p. 512.

<sup>10</sup> ibid., p. 10.



comparatively easy to lecture about literature, "but what students especially need is to be brought into direct relationship with literature in its essential, absolute character; so that the very highest form of literary lecturing is interpretative reading."<sup>11</sup> Obviously, part of the equipment of **every** teacher of poetry should be the ability to read aloud "without attempt at elocutionary effect, but forcefully and in a manner calculated to bring out what the author intended to get in his vocal values."<sup>12</sup> "Teachers should cultivate a sympathetic voice and an insight that will lead them to bring out what is in a poem. They should not rant; nor should they read in a sing-song manner."<sup>13</sup>

In addition to the teacher's reading aloud, the students should be encouraged to read verse, also, for it "is an essential part of the process of awakening appreciation in many instances."<sup>14</sup> Miss Gullan writes:

For almost all of us, though we may not know it, there is no such sure way of becoming aware of the beauties of poetry as that of speaking the poems aloud ourselves. This is true for children too. And there is no such sure way of understanding poetry as that of hearing it spoken and speaking it aloud many times until the meaning, which all the time is becoming more and more certain, is at last clear and complete and vivid in the child's mind. To spend time in explaining meanings in poetry is often to waste

---

<sup>11</sup> Corson, Hiram, The Voice and Spiritual Education, pp. 36-37.

<sup>12</sup> Morrison, Henry C., The Practice of Teaching in the Secondary School, pp. 360-61.

<sup>13</sup> Bolenius, Emma Miller, Teaching Literature in the Grammar Grades and High School, p. 18.

<sup>14</sup> Morrison, op. cit., p. 361.







time in the mud flats and shallows instead of enjoying the fresh tang of the sea-waves and their hardly-overcome buffetings.<sup>15</sup>

However, the teacher of an adolescent group will have some difficulty in getting her pupils to read aloud. They are awkward and self-conscious and their voice mechanisms are undergoing a change which makes them hard to control. They are afraid of sounding foolish or affected. They either have "a false modesty in oral interpretation, which prevents entering into the spirit of the poem" or they read with "a careless rapidity . . ., a superficial 'skimming' which, unless it is required and done with dramatic concentration, ruins whatever is read."<sup>16</sup> It is especially essential that the teacher of an adolescent group be able to give the right training in oral interpretation of poetry as well as being able to interpret for her class, for it is the best time to lay the foundations for effective speaking and a love of poetry which will be lasting.

The goal to be attained in the reading of poetry with students is "actively appreciative understanding," six phases of which are:

1. To discover and comprehend the poet's theme or his story.
2. To find the poem's essence and to assist it in having an enriched and individual significance for our pupils.
3. To participate with sympathetic understanding in the lives of the people we find in poetry.
4. To visualize the places to which the poet takes us: to respond to the poem's atmosphere.
5. To fall into step with the poem's movement: to surrender to its mood.
6. To observe the poet's skill in achieving the purposes of this poem.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Gullan, Marjorie, and Percival Gurrey, Poetry Speaking for Children Part II, p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> Untermeyer, Louis, and Carter Davidson, Poetry: Its Appreciation and Enjoyment, p. 489.

<sup>17</sup> Seely, op. cit., p. 130.



time in the end finds and shadows instead of enjoying the fresh tang of the sea-waves and their hardly-curious buffeting. 16

However, the teacher of an adolescent group will have some difficulty in getting her pupils to read aloud. They are awkward and self-conscious and their whole mechanism are undergoing a change which makes them hard to control. They are afraid of sounding foolish or affected. They either have "a false modesty in oral interpretation, which prevents entering into the spirit of the poem" or they read with "a certain rigidity . . . a superficial 'singing' which, unless it is repeated and done with dramatic concentration, ruins whatever is read." 17 It is especially essential that the teacher of an adolescent group be able to give the right training in oral interpretation of poetry as well as being able to interest her class, for it is the best time to lay the foundation for effective speaking and a love of poetry which will be lasting.

The goal to be attained in the teaching of poetry with students is "actively appreciative understanding," six phases of which are:

1. To discover and comprehend the poet's theme or his story.
2. To find the poem's essence and to assist it in having an enriched and individual significance for our pupils.
3. To participate with sympathetic understanding in the lives of the people we find in poetry.
4. To visualize the places to which the poet takes us; to respond to the poem's atmosphere.
5. To fall into step with the poem's movement; to understand its mood.
6. To observe the poet's skill in achieving the purpose of this poem.

16 Interpreting, Louie, and Carter Newman, Poetry: Its Appreciation and Enjoyment, p. 488.

17 Seely, op. cit., p. 150.

18 Children's Literature, p. 2.

19 Interpreting, Louie, and Carter Newman, Poetry: Its Appreciation and Enjoyment, p. 488.



Initial study on a new poem should usually be done in the class. If the poem is assigned without the students' having had an introduction in class, unfamiliar imagery and subtle theme are lost and only discouragement and distaste result. It will be difficult to overcome this opposition and lack of interest.<sup>18</sup> It would be far better for the teacher to read the poem to the class "in a simple, conversational manner, avoiding elocutionary vocal tactics" keeping in mind that "if under-emphasis is monotonous in effect, 'over-expression' can be almost revolting, and to no one more than to high-school boys and girls."<sup>19</sup> After the teacher has read the poem, students should be invited to read it the way they think it should be read. The resultant discussion of various interpretations and meanings will add to the enjoyment because of the group participation, the interchange of ideas, and the new meanings which will be discovered.

After the meaning has been revealed and the music of the words made evident, then is the time when a more detailed technical study may be done. Rarely will the study of rhyme schemes, figures of speech, and historical background give motivation for the appreciative reading of a poem, but the oral, communal approach will motivate further study into the matter of "why" and "how." First get the interest and stir the enthusiasm and then lead the student into the

---

<sup>18</sup> Fairchild, Arthur H. R., The Teaching of Poetry in the High School, p. 72.

<sup>19</sup> Seely, op. cit., p. 214.







study of the facts of history just as far as he will go without loss of interest.<sup>20</sup> Poetry should not be used merely "as a peg upon which to hang all manner of extraneous 'work,'" yet there are "all too many students who feel that they understand the poet as soon as they are familiar with the dictionary definition of all the words contained in a poem,"<sup>21</sup> when they can scan it, give its rhyme scheme, and a biography of the author. "If this narrow definition of meaning is insisted upon, all the real meaning will escape, leaving the poem as flat and tasteless as warm ginger ale."<sup>22</sup>

The defenders of the technical approach and emphasis in the study of poetry would have us believe that its purpose "is the increase of appreciation," and "that unless we are familiar with certain of its mechanics we cannot enjoy poetry as we should."<sup>23</sup> However, there are many things in everyday life which require no technical knowledge of their operation or construction to enjoy, as the automobile, the radio, and a symphony concert which may be enjoyed without a technical knowledge of the instruments involved. If technical knowledge makes a particular poem easier to understand, it should be taught in that connection, but "there seems to be no reason for the formal study of versification for its own sake with high-school pupils."<sup>24</sup> This study is a highly involved one and requires

---

<sup>20</sup> Fairchild, op. cit., pp. 82-83.

<sup>21</sup> Raubicheck, Letitia, Teaching Speech in Secondary Schools, pp. 84-5.

<sup>22</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>23</sup> Seely, op. cit., p. 192.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., pp. 193-94.



study of the facts of history just as far as he will go without loss of interest.<sup>20</sup> Poetry should not be used merely "as a peg upon which

to hang all manner of extraneous 'work,' yet there are 'all too many students who feel that they understand the poet as soon as they are familiar with the dictionary definition of all the words contained in a poem,"<sup>21</sup> when they can scan it, give its rhyme scheme, and a biography of the author. "It is a narrow definition of meaning is insisted upon, all the real meaning will escape, leaving

the poem as flat and tasteless as worn ginger ale."<sup>22</sup>

The teachers of the technical approach and emphasis in the study of poetry would have us believe that the purpose "is the process of apprehension," and "that unless we are familiar with certain of the mechanics we cannot enjoy poetry as we should."<sup>23</sup> However, there are many things in everyday life which require no technical knowledge of their operation or construction to enjoy, as the automobile, the radio, and a symphony concert which may be enjoyed without a technical knowledge of the instruments involved. If technical knowledge makes a particular poem easier to understand, it should be taught in that connection, but "there seems to be no reason for the formal study of versification for its own sake with high school pupils."<sup>24</sup> This study is a highly involved one and requires

<sup>20</sup> Watkins, op. cit., pp. 82-83.

<sup>21</sup> Kandianek, Textile Teaching Series in Secondary Schools, pp. 11-12.

<sup>22</sup> Id., op. cit.

<sup>23</sup> Id., op. cit., p. 102.

<sup>24</sup> Id., op. cit., pp. 103-04.



a higher level of poetic discrimination and intellectual maturity than is usually found in the high school. "Consequently, for the high-school pupil an adequate formal study of the subject is unwise, even impossible; and an elementary study is simply futile." <sup>25</sup>

Class discussion and reading of the poem give an opportunity to the skillful teacher for calling attention to the poet's skill in the use of words. Gradually the students themselves will come to a sensitiveness of the poet's manner of expression.

They will find rare pleasure in a perfect word, a phrase that says and feels and pictures at the same time, a line that dances, or trudges, or staggers, or laughs, or weeps dejectedly. This kinship with the spirit of verse comes with the understanding of poetry and with increased skill in reading it aloud. It is not achieved by overt study of techniques for their own sake. <sup>26</sup>

Teachers of poetry realize that it is practically impossible to make out or administer a test which will adequately indicate the degree to which a student has assimilated the meaning and mood of a poem. Theme, form, life of the poet, and the literary background --being factual material--may be tested, but the deeper things having to do with personal appreciation and enjoyment are harder to subject to a testing program. "The best evidence of one's rapprochement with a poem is the quality of one's oral reading of it. One's active and complete response is indicated in this reading, not only to the reader himself but also to his hearers." <sup>27</sup> If this is true, why not

---

<sup>25</sup> Fullington, James F., "Versification in the High School," English Journal, H. S. Ed., XX.(June, 1931), 484.

<sup>26</sup> Seely, op. cit., pp. 172-73.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 122.







examine a student's knowledge of a poem by having him read it aloud? His oral reading will give a better indication of what he has learned intellectually and spiritually than any examination questions would reveal. Assuming, of course, that the student has had the training which will enable him to use his voice correctly, his reading of a given poem will reveal more certainly what he has received from it than any amount of questioning. Even the uncultivated voice would reveal this to some extent, for "reading reveals the reader's spiritual appreciation or the absence of it."<sup>28</sup>

The pupil who, in some adequate measure, has been made sensible of the beauty, inspiration, and power of poetry; who has been led to feel the awakening and liberalizing effect of a single great poem; who has learned not merely to talk about poetry in the classroom but to read it with delight in his leisure hours, has learned the secret of literary appreciation. No teacher can bestow a finer gift."<sup>29</sup>

The following chapter will show in what respects choral speaking may be used by the teacher as an aid in the bestowal of this "gift."

---

<sup>28</sup> Corson, op. cit., pp. 55-56.

<sup>29</sup> Fairchild, op. cit., p. 91.







## XII. CHORAL SPEAKING AN AID IN THE TEACHING OF POETRY

The values of choral speaking in a general way have been discussed in a previous chapter.<sup>1</sup> The values are classified as artistic and educational. This chapter will include a discussion of the educational objectives which are "probably its primary, and perhaps greatest, value."<sup>2</sup>

Miss de Banke says that teachers of English are the chief ones interested in choral speaking. She continues:

This is fortunate for there is no more effective approach to the appreciation of literature than through choral rendition. The value of adding to the understanding and appreciation of good literature the communal enjoyment of its oral interpretation is so sound that I feel that the establishment of choral speaking in the English department is inevitable.<sup>3</sup>

How do choral speaking techniques and objectives correlate with those of the teacher of poetry? May this method of approach be the fulfillment of the acknowledged need among teachers for a better way of presenting poetry to their classes? The following pages will assay an answer to these and similar questions.

The qualifications of the English teacher and the conductor of a verse choir correspond for both must be lovers of poetry and should like to read it silently and aloud. Both need a knowledge of the types of poetry and a background of the history of literature and

---

<sup>1</sup> Supra, pp. 5-7.

<sup>2</sup> Swann, Mona, An Approach to Choral Speech, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> The Art of Choral Speaking, p. 23.



THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

PUBLISHED WEEKLY

Subscription price, Five Dollars Per Annum in Advance

Single Copies, Fifteen Cents

Entered as Second-Class Matter, May 2, 1912, Post Office at Chicago, Ill., under No. 383,961

Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Act of October 3, 1917, authorized on July 1, 1918

Postage paid at Chicago, Ill., and at additional mailing offices

Copyright, 1918, by American Medical Association

Published by the American Medical Association, 535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill. 60610  
Second-class postage paid at Chicago, Ill., and at additional mailing offices  
Postmaster: This publication is published weekly except on Sundays, holidays and days when the mails are closed. It is published for the American Medical Association, which is not responsible for the contents of the publication.

Subscription orders, notices of change of address, and other correspondence should be sent to the Editor, American Medical Association, 535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill. 60610

Claims for missing issues will only be considered if made immediately on receipt of subsequent issue

Entered as Second-Class Matter, May 2, 1912, Post Office at Chicago, Ill., under No. 383,961

Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Act of October 3, 1917, authorized on July 1, 1918

Postage paid at Chicago, Ill., and at additional mailing offices

Copyright, 1918, by American Medical Association

Published by the American Medical Association, 535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill. 60610

Second-class postage paid at Chicago, Ill., and at additional mailing offices

Postmaster: This publication is published weekly except on Sundays, holidays and days when the mails are closed. It is published for the American Medical Association, which is not responsible for the contents of the publication.

Subscription price, Five Dollars Per Annum in Advance

Single Copies, Fifteen Cents

Entered as Second-Class Matter, May 2, 1912, Post Office at Chicago, Ill., under No. 383,961



poetry. The English teacher, as well as the choir leader, needs to have an ear for poetic sound patterns and rhythm; her aim, like the director's, "is to quicken the perceptions of the class so that they may be able to feel intensely the emotions and thoughts expressed by the poet."<sup>4</sup> The choir leader must have a technical knowledge of good speech habits so that he may give training in the proper use of the voice; every teacher of poetry should equip himself with a like training so that he may not be handicapped in revealing to his students the music of spoken verse. The director of a verse-speaking group must "have power to help his pupils think truly, feel sensitively and deeply, and to express the thought and feeling with spontaneity, as well as with unity."<sup>5</sup> A successful teacher of poetry can do no more.

Any poetry class contains the makings of a verse-speaking choir, for a special training in speech is not a prerequisite to membership in a choir. The choir provides such training. The students in an English class are in close touch with the history of poetry and know something of its characteristics; they will understand simple poems more readily than a group of people who are entirely out of touch with poetry. This understanding is essential for "the author's thought must be realized, and the imagery and spirit of the poem assimilated to give expression of it."<sup>6</sup> Progress will be more rapid

---

<sup>4</sup> Burdsall, Marjorie E., Practical Methods in Choral Speaking, Marguerite E. De Witt and others, p. 183.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 180.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 181.



poetry. The English teacher, as well as the choir leader, needs to have an ear for poetic sound patterns and rhythm; for this, like the director's, "is no quickened perception of the almost as they may be able to feel intensely the emotions and thoughts expressed by the poet."<sup>4</sup> The choir leader must have a technical knowledge of good speech habits so that he may give training in the proper use of the voice; every teacher of poetry should equip himself with a like training so that he may not be handicapped in revealing to his students the music of spoken verse. The director of a verse-speaking group must "have power to help his pupils think clearly, feel sensitively, and deeply, and to express the thought and feeling with accuracy, as well as with unity."<sup>5</sup> A successful teacher of poetry can do no more.

Any poetry class contains the makings of a verse-speaking choir. For a special training in speech is not a prerequisite to membership in a choir. The choir provides such training. The students in an English class are in close touch with the history of poetry and know something of its characteristics; they will understand simple poems more readily than a group of people who are entirely out of touch with poetry. This understanding is essential for "the author's thought must be realized, and the imagery and spirit of the poem assimilated to give expression of it."<sup>6</sup> Progress will be more rapid

<sup>4</sup> Handbook, Methods in English Teaching, by Margaret E. De Witte and others, p. 183.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 180.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 181.



with a group who already know something about poetry, even if they lack speech training, than with one in which the members have no direct experience with poetry.

The primary object in teaching poetry is to give "an appreciation and a joyous delight in the individual poem; a comprehension of its meaning; a feeling for its emotional tone; and enjoyment of the beauty of its diction, style, and form."<sup>7</sup> Teachers who have experimented with choral speaking in connection with the teaching of English testify to its effectiveness. An English instructor in the John Burroughs School, St. Louis, Missouri, writes:

Perhaps the most heart-warming result of the work with this group was their heightened love for poetry. At their own request, part of each practice period was devoted to reading aloud poems which they brought in or asked for, and neither the lunch-bell nor the entrance of another class would break their rapt attention. . . . To make speech chorus work of most value in regular English courses, the essence of the problem is to choose poems which will appeal to the class, and, at the same time, by their increasing literary quality bring the students to more and more subtle appreciation of all the various types of poetry and rhythmic prose."<sup>8</sup>

In an article in the Christian Science Monitor of August 14, 1934, Karla V. Parker asserts that choral speech work fostered a love of poetry among their students, also. She says that the librarian of their school has never in her experience known such a demand for books and poems.<sup>9</sup> Another teacher says that "one of the English teacher's main objectives is to bring genuine enjoyment of good literature to his students," and she can "think of no surer nor more

---

<sup>7</sup> Fairchild, Arthur H. R., The Teaching of Poetry in the High School, pp. 82-83.

<sup>8</sup> Mares, Delia Smith, Practical Methods in Choral Speaking, Marguerite E. De Witt and others, pp. 175-76.

<sup>9</sup> "Choirs That Do Not Sing," Christian Science Monitor, XXVI.



with a group who already know something about poetry, even if they lack speech training, than with one in which the speakers have no direct experience with poetry.

The primary object in teaching poetry is to give "an appreciation and a joyous delight in the individual poem; a comprehension of its meaning; a feeling for its emotional tone; and enjoyment of the beauty of its diction, style, and form."<sup>17</sup> Teachers who have experimented with choral speaking in connection with the teaching of English testify to its effectiveness: an English instructor in the John Burroughs School, St. Louis, Missouri, writes:

Perhaps the most heart-warming result of the work with this group was their heightened love for poetry. At their own request, parts of each recitation period were devoted to reading aloud poems which they brought in or asked for, and neither the lunch-bell nor the entrance of another class would break their rapt attention. . . . To make speech courses work at most value in regular English courses, the essence of the problem is to choose poems which will appeal to the class, and, at the same time, by their increasing literary quality bring the students to more and more subtle appreciation of all the various types of poetry and rhythmic prose.<sup>18</sup>

In an article in the Christian Science Monitor of August 11, 1934, Edwin L. Parker asserts that choral speech work fostered a love of poetry among their students, also. She says that the liberation of their school has never in her experience known such a demand for books and poems.<sup>19</sup> Another teacher says that "one of the English teacher's main objectives is to bring genuine enjoyment of good literature to his students," and she can "think of no surer nor more

<sup>17</sup> Wetzel, Arthur S. H., "The Teaching of Poetry in the High School," p. 84-85.

<sup>18</sup> Wetzel, Arthur S. H., "The Teaching of Poetry in the High School," p. 84-85.



interesting a way than by this fascinating kind of choral speaking."<sup>10</sup> Miss Gullan and Mr. Gurrey have inquired the results of the work from teachers of both Infant and Junior schools who have been using choral speaking in their classes:

These teachers have put it on record that the results of choral speaking are particularly satisfactory, not only because by this means diction and tone receive such good training, but because the enjoyment the children have in giving expression in chorus to fine rhythms and rhymes and vivid images gives them a desire to learn more and more poetry on their own account.<sup>11</sup>

Naturally, where the work is merely the old-fashioned concert recitation and used as a means of memorizing, these good results do not follow. These delightful results come as the result of speaking the poetry not only aloud but as a group, after the message and mood have been assimilated. "It is this exercising of the best powers of the mind and the imagination by means of the poet's words that is the end and aim of all verse speaking,"<sup>12</sup> and, it might be added, of all effective teaching of poetry. Since a literature course which includes choral speaking brings a realization of the "direct relationship and interdependence of the written and spoken word, it seems not at all unreasonable to hope that choral speaking . . . will be installed in the department of English literature, where it will be of equal value to instructors and students."<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Burdsall, op. cit., p. 188.

<sup>11</sup> Poetry Speaking for Children Part II, pp. 139-40.

<sup>12</sup> Gullan, Marjorie, The Speech Choir, p. 258.

<sup>13</sup> de Banke, Cecile, The Art of Choral Speaking, p. 171.



interesting way than by this fascinating kind of choral speaking.<sup>10</sup>  
 Miss Gellan and Mr. Gurrey have measured the results of the work  
 from teachers of both infant and junior schools who have been  
 using choral speaking in their classes:

These teachers have put it on record that the results of choral  
 speaking are sufficiently satisfactory, not only because by this  
 means children and some receive such good training, but because  
 the enjoyment the children have in giving expression in chorus  
 to fine rhythms and rhymes and vivid images gives them a desire  
 to learn more and more poetry on their own account.<sup>11</sup>

Naturally, where the work is merely the old-fashioned concert recita-  
 tion and used as a means of memorizing, these good results do not  
 follow. These delightful results come as the result of speaking the  
 poetry not only alone but as a group, after the message and mood  
 have been assimilated. "It is this exercising of the best powers  
 of the mind and the imagination by means of the poet's words that  
 is the end and aim of all verse speaking," and, it might be added,  
 of all effective teaching of poetry. Since a literature course  
 which includes choral speaking brings a realization of the "direct  
 relationship and interdependence of the written and spoken word,  
 it seems not at all unnecessary to hope that choral speaking . . .  
 will be installed in the department of English literature, where  
 it will be of great value to instructors and students.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Forbes, op. cit., p. 188.  
<sup>11</sup> Poetry Speaking for Children Part II, pp. 138-40.  
<sup>12</sup> Gellan, Marjorie, The Speech Unit, p. 228.  
<sup>13</sup> de Maria, Cecilia, The Art of Choral Speaking, p. 171.



Although the chief end in teaching poetry is to foster a liking for it and an appreciation of it, there are times when some knowledge of the techniques of verse is necessary for appreciation. This technical material receives the greater amount of emphasis by some teachers and it is this mechanical view of poetry which makes it distasteful in many instances.<sup>14</sup> In connection with choral speech work, the students become aware of such things as rhythm, rhyme, stanza patterns, and the poet's use of words which help him to create the mood or tell the story. They learn that "the colors on the poet's palette are words,"<sup>15</sup> and that a study of the poet's artistry in choice of words is the beginning of literary appreciation. They learn that verbs and adjectives are the most important words in poetic diction and that nouns are given poetic values because of the verbs and adjectives with which they are associated.<sup>16</sup> "The analysis of poetic artistry is part of their growth, their awareness, and their delight."<sup>17</sup> Form is less obvious in oral presentation than when written, but the speaking choir "must be able to communicate to its listeners the various poetic forms."<sup>18</sup> In order to be able to do this, it "must have a very sharp mental image of

---

<sup>14</sup> Supra, pp. 59, 64-65.

<sup>15</sup> de Banke, op. cit., p. 176.

<sup>16</sup> Fairchild, Arthur H. R., op. cit., pp. 123-24.

<sup>17</sup> de Banke, op. cit., p. 176.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 178.



Although the chief end in teaching poetry is to foster a liking for it and an appreciation of it, there are times when some knowledge of the techniques of verse is necessary for appreciation. This technical material resolves the greater amount of emphasis by some teachers and is in this mechanical view of poetry which makes it distasteful in many instances.<sup>14</sup> In connection with choral speech work, the students become aware of such things as rhythm, rhyme, stanza patterns, and the poet's use of words which help him to create the mood or tell the story. They learn that "the colors of the poet's palette are words,"<sup>15</sup> and that a study of the poet's artistry in choice of words is the beginning of literary appreciation. They learn that verbs and adjectives are the most important words in poetic diction and that nouns are given poetic values because of the verbs and adjectives with which they are associated.<sup>16</sup> The analysis of poetic artistry is part of their growth, their understanding, and their delight.<sup>17</sup> Form is less obvious in oral presentation than when written, but the speaking whole "must be able to communicate to the listener the various poetic forms."<sup>18</sup> In order to be able to do this, it "must have a very sharp mental image of

<sup>14</sup> ibid., pp. 52, 53-54.  
<sup>15</sup> ibid., pp. 175.  
<sup>16</sup> ibid., pp. 175.  
<sup>17</sup> ibid., pp. 175.  
<sup>18</sup> ibid., p. 175.



the form, and must make it felt quite definitely by means of length of pause, length of terminal sounds, and accentuation of rhythm."<sup>19</sup>

"Studies in the recognition of rhythm, rhyme, and stanza pattern will form the basis of all our later choral work," writes Miss Gullan.<sup>20</sup>

Teaching the forms of poetry includes rhythm of various kinds, the effect of variety in rhythm, the value of pauses, the nature of rhyme, alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, and stanza forms.<sup>21</sup>

There is not one of these which cannot be included incidentally and with more lasting effect in connection with the oral, group presentation of poetry. In addition to becoming aware of the techniques of verse, students will learn to get the meaning and mood of the poet so that they may speak his verse well, for no oral expression is attempted until the speakers have penetrated into the workings of the poet's mind. This process of coming into an understanding of what the poem says will lead naturally and logically to an interest in the author, his background, and his personality.

Choral speaking is an aid toward the ultimate objective of all education,--the general aims of an enriched social and cultural life not only in school but throughout life. Discussion of poems in school leads the students to ask permission to speak certain poems which they have heard or read themselves, and nearly always they come to desire to carry on the work at home,<sup>22</sup> thus making poetry not only a leisure pursuit of the students but also bringing poetry into the home where other members of the family will be interested.

---

<sup>19</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>20</sup> Choral Speaking, p. 43.

<sup>21</sup> Stratton, op. cit., pp. 80-102.

<sup>22</sup> Gullan, op. cit., p. 9.



the form, and must make it felt quite definitely by means of length of pause, length of terminal sounds, and association of rhythm."

"Studies in the recognition of rhythm, rhyme, and stanza pattern

will form the basis of all our later general work," writes Miss Gellan.<sup>20</sup>

Technique the form of poetry includes rhythm of various kinds, the

effect of variety in rhythm, the value of pause, the nature of

verse, alliteration, onomatopoeia, and stanza forms.<sup>21</sup>

There is not one of these which cannot be taught technically and

with more lasting effect in connection with the oral, group process-

ation of poetry. In addition to becoming aware of the techniques

of verse, students will learn to get the meaning and mood of the poet

so that they may speak his verse well, for an oral expression is

assigned until the speaker has penetrated into the workings of

the poet's mind. This process of seeing into an understanding of

what the poem says will last naturally and logically to an interest

in the author, his background, and his personality.

Choral speaking is an aid toward the highest objective of all

education--the general aim of an enriched social and cultural life

not only in school but throughout life. Discussion of poems is

school leads the students to ask questions to seek certain poems

which they have heard or read themselves, and nearly always they come

to desire to carry on the work at home,<sup>22</sup> thus making poetry not

only a leisure pursuit of the students but also bringing poetry into

the home where other members of the family will be interested.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 114.

<sup>20</sup> Choral speaking, p. 43.

<sup>21</sup> Choral speaking, pp. 101-102.

<sup>22</sup> Choral speaking, pp. 101-102.



Since a verse choir is a cooperative activity it gives training in social relationships, working for the best of the group, and responding to direction of the leader. The students learn to understand and enjoy poetry for themselves and to share this enjoyment with others. "Though they may never actually speak poetry after they leave the choral class, the artistic experience in which they have shared will never be forgotten."<sup>23</sup> They will retain throughout life the feeling of acquaintanceship with poetry and its makers. It is probable, especially with students in the high schools or colleges, that those who have learned to love poetry through speaking it will be instrumental in organizing verse-speaking choirs in their clubs and churches after they have finished school. The use of choral speaking by adults in connection with summer camps, clubs, and as an aid in social adjustment is becoming widespread, especially in America.<sup>24</sup>

Choral speaking does not pretend to replace the dramatic activities found in most schools. It is used with the drama, but it is definitely not acting. An effective use is in connection with the voice training necessary as a preliminary to dramatics. It has an advantage over the drama as an educational activity since it does not emphasize any one individual;<sup>25</sup> the whole group benefits from choral work and there is a democratic spirit in it often lacking in dramatic activities.

---

<sup>23</sup> Gullan, op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>24</sup> de Banke, op. cit., pp. 23-24.

<sup>25</sup> Horn, John Louis, "The Speech Chorus." The English Journal, H. S. and Col. edition, XIX (June, 1930), p. 480.



since a verse choir is a cooperative activity it gives training in social relationships, working for the good of the group, and responding to direction of the leader. The students learn to understand and enjoy poetry for themselves and to share this enjoyment with others. "Though they may never actually speak poetry after they leave the school choir, the artistic experience in which they have shared will never be forgotten."<sup>22</sup> They will retain throughout life the feeling of acquaintance with poetry and its makers. It is probable, especially with students in the high schools or colleges, that those who have learned to love poetry through speaking it will be instrumental in organizing verse-speaking choirs in their clubs and churches after they have finished school. The use of verse speaking by adults in connection with summer camps, clubs, and as an aid in social adjustment is becoming widespread, especially in

American.<sup>23</sup>

Choir speaking does not pretend to replace the dramatic activities found in most schools. It is used with the drama, but it is definitely not acting. An effective use is in connection with the voice training necessary as a preliminary to dramatics. It has an advantage over the drama as an educational activity since it does not emphasize any one individual.<sup>24</sup> The whole group benefits from group work and there is a democratic spirit in it often lacking in dramatic activities.

<sup>22</sup> Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>23</sup> de Sampa, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-26.

<sup>24</sup> Horn, John Lewis, "The Group Drama," *The English Journal*, Vol. 2, and *Journal of Education*, 1920, p. 480.



The use of choral speaking in the teaching of poetry helps to break down the students' dislike for it,--a dislike resulting from a too intellectual analysis of it without a realization of its meaning and beauty, and the distaste for "memory gems."<sup>26</sup> It has already been stated that poetry should not be a "peg" upon which to hang all kinds of extraneous "work."<sup>27</sup> In many cases, an insight into the poet's message and how he has achieved his effects will lead naturally to a study of the man and his relation to the period of literature to which he belongs. Instead of becoming "work" assigned by the teacher, such study comes as the natural result of aroused interest and curiosity. Although memorizing poetry is usually a distasteful task to students, it may be made an almost unconscious process when done in connection with a choir. Poetry "appeals to the imagination and the emotions; . . . to the heart rather than to the head. To learn 'by heart' might be called learning through the imagination and emotion, rather than through the intellect or 'by rote.'"<sup>28</sup> Choral speaking provides a way of memorizing "by heart." Traditional educational methods have been criticized because they are too much concerned with intellectual analysis. "We neglect to strengthen habits of concrete appreciation of the individual facts in their full interplay of emergent values, and . . . merely emphasize abstract formulations which ignore this

---

<sup>26</sup> Supra, pp. 59-60.

<sup>27</sup> Supra, pp. 63-64.

<sup>28</sup> Keppie, Elizabeth, The Teaching of Choric Speech, p. 20.



The use of choral speaking in the teaching of poetry helps to break down the student's dislike for it,--a dislike resulting from a too intellectual analysis of it without a realization of its meaning and beauty, and the distance for "a very poem."<sup>26</sup> It has already been stated that poetry should not be a "poem" open which to hang all kinds of extraneous "work."<sup>27</sup> In many cases, an insight into the poet's meaning and how he has achieved his effects will lead naturally to a study of the man and his relation to the period of literature to which he belongs. Interest of becoming "work" sustained by the teacher, such study comes as the natural result of aroused interest and curiosity. Although memorizing poetry is usually a distasteful task to students, it may be made an almost unobtrusive process when done in connection with a story. Poetry "appeals to the imagination and the emotions; . . . to the heart rather than to the head. To learn 'by heart' might be called learning through the imagination and emotion, rather than through the intellect or 'by rote.'"<sup>28</sup> Choral speaking provides a way of memorizing "by heart." Traditional educational methods have been criticized because they are too much concerned with intellectual analysis. "The neglect to strengthen habits of concrete appreciation of the individual facts in their full interest of concrete values, and . . . merely emphasize abstract formalities with ignore this

<sup>26</sup> Source, pp. 22-23.

<sup>27</sup> Source, pp. 22-23.

<sup>28</sup> Leppie, Elizabeth, The Teaching of Literature, p. 20.



aspect of the interplay of diverse values;" education, to be effective, should try to "satisfy the itch of youth to be doing something."<sup>29</sup> Choral speaking does this by giving the students a chance to feel and live the verse they are speaking; their "appreciation of poetic forms and ideas is aroused, and their imaginations are stimulated."<sup>30</sup> Not only is <sup>this</sup> true for the members of the choir, but those who make up the audiences at public demonstrations or programs enjoy hearing poetry read in this vital manner. Many people are getting a new vision of the possibilities of poetry through hearing it spoken chorally. Large audiences are attending programs of spoken verse both in Europe and the United States. One high school teacher who trained a group of five boys and seven girls--who were absolutely without previous training--tells of her experience when they presented a program of poems in the high school assembly:

After the first line, I forgot to be tense, and began to be thrilled along with the rest of the audience, for high-school people did enjoy that poetry. It was an outstanding feature of the programs for the year. . . . In this case poetry had become an experience <sup>31</sup> to a small group and somewhat a revelation to a whole school.

The pleasure of sharing this poetry experience with an audience, though not the primary purpose of the work, is an effective way to break down the feelings of dislike for poetry; social approval, more than any other thing, will help students realize that poetry is a vital, pulsating thing closely akin to life and not just a lot of sentimental obscurity.

---

<sup>29</sup> Chapin, Elsa, and Russell Thomas, A New Approach to Poetry, p. vii, quoting Whitehead, Science and the Modern World, pp. 284-85.

<sup>30</sup> Loar, Grace, Practical Methods in Choral Speaking, Marguerite E. De Witt and others, p. 201.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., pp. 200-01.



aspect of the integrity of diverse values; "education, to be effective, should try to 'activate' the life of youth to be doing something."<sup>29</sup> School speaking does this by giving the students a chance to feel and live the verse they are speaking; their "appreciation of poetic forms and ideas is aroused, and their imaginations are stimulated."<sup>30</sup> Not only is this true for the members of the school, but those who take up the audience at public demonstrations or programs enjoy hearing poetry read in this vital manner. Many people are getting a new vision of the possibilities of poetry through hearing it spoken orally. Large audiences are attending programs of spoken verse both in Europe and the United States. One high school teacher who trained a group of five boys and seven girls--who were absolutely without previous training--fell of her experience when they presented a program of poems in the high school assembly:

After the first line, I forgot to be tense, and began to be thrilled along with the rest of the audience, for high-school people did enjoy that poetry. It was an outstanding feature of the program for the year. . . . In this case poetry had become an experience; it was a small group and somewhat a revelation to a whole school.<sup>31</sup>

The pleasure of sharing this poetry experience with an audience, though not the primary purpose of the work, is an effective way to break down the feelings of aloofness for poetry; social approval, more than any other thing, will help students realize that poetry is a vital, pulsating thing closely akin to life and not just a lot of sentimental platitudes.

<sup>29</sup> C. L. Ransel, *Ways and Means of Teaching Poetry*, p. vii.  
<sup>30</sup> C. L. Ransel, *Ways and Means of Teaching Poetry*, p. vii.  
<sup>31</sup> Ibid., pp. 200-01.



### XIII. CONCLUSION

The foregoing chapters have endeavored to give a clear conception of the values, objectives, and methods of choral speaking, with suggestions as to choice of material and procedure. Mention has been made of the prevalent dislike for poetry among students and reasons for this dislike have been suggested. Choral speaking, if properly conducted, helps to do away with this dislike and at the same time is a teaching aid which can be easily adapted to almost any type of literature class where the emphasis is on poetry. Good results will follow only if the work is based on good speech habits and a desire to enter more fully into the message of the poet. Where it is done merely for display and entertainment purposes, little good will result and probably a great deal of harm.

We would hesitate to recommend that every English teacher organize her class into a speech choir. Her own qualifications and the circumstances must determine whether she can use this method to advantage. Neither would we advocate the group speaking of every poem studied in class. If it is done at all, selection of material must be done with care. Under the title, "Is Choric Reading a Fad?", the English Journal of March, 1936, commented editorially: "We conclude that choric reading is sound if well done, and meretricious only if mishandled. What are the dangers in the latter direction? Overuse, probably more than anything else."<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> XXV (March, 1936), pp. 242-43.



The foregoing chapters have endeavored to give a clear conception of the values, objectives, and methods of choral speaking, with suggestions as to choice of material and procedure. Mention has been made of the prevalent dislike for poetry among students and reasons for this dislike have been suggested. Choral speaking, if properly conducted, helps to do away with this dislike and at the same time is a teaching aid which can be easily adapted to almost any type of literature class where the emphasis is on poetry. Good results will follow only if the work is based on good speech habits and a desire to enter more fully into the meaning of the poet. There it is done merely for display and entertainment purposes, little good will result and probably a great deal of harm.

We would hesitate to recommend that every English teacher organize her class into a speech choir. Her own qualifications and the circumstances must determine whether she can use this method to advantage. Neither would we advocate the group speaking of every poem studied in class. It is true at all, selection of material must be done with care. Under the title, "Is Choral Speaking a Fad?", the English Journal of March, 1935, contained editorially: "We conclude that choral speaking is sound if well done, and disastrous only if mismanaged. What are the dangers in the latter direction? Overuse, probably more than anything else."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> KEY (March, 1935), pp. 242-43.



However, every English teacher should be able to read poetry aloud so that its music and meaning may be revealed to the students. Furthermore, choral speaking has much to offer in the way of increased enjoyment and appreciation because it gives an opportunity for participation by the whole group. The careful study of a new poem, the group discussion as to its mood and meaning, the cooperative effort to express the poet's meaning in an artistic way, all these activities enter into the procedure of the verse choir or the efficient poetry class. They can be used effectively and economically for both simultaneously.

Poetry has lost much through its "exile in a land of paper and print;" who knows but choral verse speaking is the Moses who "will lead it back to its old glories of the living voice and the hearing of the ear?"<sup>2</sup> If it can enrich and revivify the poetical heritage of the student, its modern revival will not have been in vain.

---

<sup>2</sup> Gummere, Francis B., The Beginnings of Poetry, p. 457.







#### XIV. SUMMARY

Choral speaking is the artistic interpretation by a group of the poet's meaning and mood as revealed to them by a careful study of the poem. This oral presentation is based on proper speech habits and has nothing in common with so-called "elocution." It takes the form of refrain, antiphonal, line-a-person, or unison speaking depending entirely upon the method which gives the best expression of the poet's message. It is definitely not a revival of the old-fashioned concert recitation which was merely a parrot-like **repétition** without any thought as to artistic interpretation. A verse choir is a cooperative activity with the members contributing suggestions as to meaning and method.

At its best, this work is not done as a stunt or for exhibition purposes but with worth-while objectives in view. These values are three-fold,--social, artistic, and educational. The educational values are of two kind--training for better speech and for poetry appreciation. The latter is the chief concern of this thesis.

Poetry was kept alive by oral transmission from poet to hearer long before the days of printing. Even the printed poem conveys some idea of the sound of the words as well as their meaning, but for most people this auditory impression from the silent reading of a poem is meager and inadequate. Thus they lose the emotional appeal inherent in the sound of the words. Music and poetry are the two arts of sound and have much in common; therefore, the group speaking of poetry does no violence to the nature and origin of poetry itself.







The human voice is a complex musical instrument of the wood-wind type. It is capable of producing a large variety of tone-colors (something which no other musical instrument can do) simply by changing the shape of the mouth and throat in speaking the vowels and consonants which make up words. A comparison of the singing voice and the speaking voice shows the latter to have a range about three times that of the former. Proficiency in the use of this wonderful instrument of the speaking-voice comes with training and practice.

The use of the speaking voice for giving power to poetry is not a modern discovery; neither is the idea of group speaking. In its beginnings, poetry was not only oral but communal. There are many interesting survivals among primitive people today of early choral rituals. The Gregorian Chant is a link in the chain connecting primitive forms of communal expression with the modern revival of choral speaking. Other links in the same chain are the chorus of the early Greek drama and the medieval ballads with their refrains spoken by the whole group.

The first modern performance of poetry speaking by a group took place in Scotland in 1922. Miss Marjorie Gullan directed the group and is still an authority on verse-speaking. The idea was immediately hailed with enthusiasm and the movement, fostered by John Masefield and Gordon Bottomley among others, spread to other parts of Great Britain and Europe. Strangely enough, the United States was slow in starting experimentation but since 1933 the interest in schools and colleges has been wide-spread.



The human voice is a complex musical instrument of the vocal tract. It is capable of producing a large variety of tone-colors (something which no other musical instrument can do) simply by changing the shape of the mouth and throat in speaking the vowels and consonants which make up words. A comparison of the singing voice and the speaking voice shows the latter to have a range about three times that of the former. Proficiency in the use of this wonderful instrument of the speaking voice comes with training and practice.

The use of the speaking voice for giving poetry to poetry is not a modern discovery; neither is the idea of group speaking. In its beginnings, poetry was not only oral but communal. There are many interesting survivals of this primitive type of early poetry. The Greek choros, for example, is a link in the chain connecting primitive forms of communal expression with the modern revival of choral speaking. Other links in the same chain are the choros of the early Greek drama and the medieval ballads with their refrains spoken by the whole group.

The first modern performance of poetry speaking by a group took place in England in 1908. Miss Katherine Wilson directed the group and its skill in authority on verse-speaking. The idea was immediately taken up with enthusiasm and the movement, fostered by John Addington Symonds, spread to other parts of Great Britain and Europe. It rapidly caught, the United States was slow in starting experimentation but since 1908 the interest in schools and colleges has been widespread.



No previous speech training or poetry experience is necessary for the members of a choir since the choir training includes both. The work, of course, will progress more rapidly if the group are familiar with one or the other or both. The number of voices in a choir is a matter for the director to decide; fifteen to about twenty-five is generally considered the most advantageous. If both men and women are in the group, the women's voices should exceed the men's since they are lighter. The director needs to have a keen ear for poetic sound patterns, a thorough knowledge of speech fundamentals, a background of literary history, and a deep and abiding love for poetry. Never should the director become a model to be copied by every member; his function is to lead and suggest, not dictate. It is well for the director to have several poems of the same type and let the group decide which they prefer. The initial presentation of the poems should be an oral one. A study of various kinds of poems and practice in saying them will gradually result in an imaginative appreciation and a sympathetic rendering of the poet's message which will be a revelation to speakers and hearers alike.

Material for group speaking should be considered in the light of the following criteria: (a) It should have a communal and general point of view rather than a personal; (b) It must be appropriate; (c) It should appeal to the group; (c) Long poems usually need to be cut; (d) It must gain by being voiced. The whole field of poetry is open to a verse choir. Ballads, both traditional and modern, are an excellent choice; lyrics may be used if care is taken in their



The previous aspect training or poetry experience is necessary for the members of a choir since the choir training includes both. The work, of course, will progress more rapidly if the group are familiar with one or the other or both. The number of voices in a choir is a matter for the director to decide; fifteen to about twenty-five is generally considered the most advantageous. If both men and women are in the group, the women's voices should exceed the men's since they are lighter. The director needs to have a fair ear for poetic sound patterns, a thorough knowledge of speech fundamentals, a background of literary history, and a deep and abiding love for poetry. Never should the director become a model to be copied by every member; his function is to lead and suggest, not dictate. It is well for the director to have several poems of the same type and let the group decide which they prefer. The initial presentation of the poems should be an oral one, a study of various kinds of poems and exercises in writing each with gradually result in an imaginative appreciation and a sympathetic rendering of the poet's message which will be a revelation to speakers and hearers alike.

Material for group speaking should be considered in the light of the following criteria: (a) It should have a dramatic and general point of view rather than a personal; (b) it must be appropriate; (c) It should appeal to the group; (d) long poems usually need to be cut; (e) it must gain by being voiced. The whole field of poetry is open to a verse choir. Ballads, both traditional and modern, are an excellent choice; lyrics may be used if care is taken in their



selection; dramatic choruses are a natural choice; Biblical poetry has a great deal to offer; nonsense and nursery rhymes have a real value; contemporary poetry offers wide possibilities; American Indian and negro verse have a traditional basis and may be used; poetic prose will interest advanced choirs.

Choral speaking has been used by teachers of English in an endeavor to make poetry come alive for their students with heart-warming results. The wide-spread dislike of poetry by students is largely because it is taught too objectively, and with too much emphasis on the technicalities of poetry and too little actual contact with it. Another element which enters into their aversion is the practice of assigning "memory gems." A teacher who can herself read poetry so that its meaning and beauty are made clear can do a great deal toward overcoming her students' distaste for it. It is even better if she can help them to read it aloud for themselves. Choral speaking in the classroom goes a step further by letting them experience the poetry together, giving an opportunity for speaking it without self-consciousness as one of a group, and making memorization an automatic process instead of a set task. The contact with poetry itself will arouse an interest in and a motivation for further study about the author, literary background, and such technicalities as make the poem of more interest and meaning.

Choral speaking in the poetry class can be made a vital and lasting power for good,--and without much difficulty. A good teacher of poetry can learn to lead out in speech choir work, for the qualifications of a good teacher and a director are similar. Any



selection; dramatic choruses are a natural choice; Biblical poetry has a great deal to offer; modern and ancient poems have a real value; contemporary poetry offers wide possibilities; American Indian and negro verse have a traditional basis and may be used; poetic prose will interest advanced choirs.

Choral speaking has been used by teachers of English in an endeavor to make poetry come alive for their students with heart-winning results. The wide-spread dislike of poetry by students is largely because it is not known objectively, and with too much emphasis on the technicalities of poetry and too little actual contact with it. Another element which enters into their aversion is the practice of assigning "memory poems." A teacher who can himself read poetry so that its meaning and beauty are made clear can do a great deal toward overcoming her students' dislike for it. It is even better if she can help them to read it aloud for themselves. Choral speaking in the classroom goes a step further by letting them experience the poetry together, giving an opportunity for speaking it without self-consciousness as one of a group, and making memorization an automatic process instead of a set task. The contact with poetry itself will arouse an interest in and a motivation for further study about the author, literary background, and such technicalities as make the poem of more interest and meaning.

Choral speaking in the poetry class can be made a vital and lasting power for good,--and without much difficulty. A good teacher of poetry can learn to lead out in speech their work, for the goal/visions of a good teacher and a director are similar. Any



class can be made into a choir or choirs for the speaking of poetry since no previous training is necessary. The objectives for the study of poetry in the school are exactly those toward which choral speaking is directed and the best methods of the former correlate with the methods of the latter, hence a combining of the two means little extra time and effort but produces better results. The greatest appeal choral speaking can make to the teacher is that it helps to break down the student's aversion for poetry by making learning an active rather than a passive process, by making technicalities incidental, by giving even the hearers a new insight into the beauties of poetry, and by making his poetic experience something he can share with others.

There is a possibility that choral speaking may come into disrepute through misuse by those who do not understand its purposes and values. Not every English teacher can use it in every class. The instructor must be sure that he understands its possibilities and must then use discrimination in its application. When used skillfully, it will result in lasting benefit to the choir members and the people who hear them.

*of English Verse. London: J. E. Dent  
1925. 234 pp.*

Collington, James F. "Versification in the High School," *English  
Journal*, N. S. edition, XI (June, 1911), pp. 473-486.

Waltan, Marjorie. *Choral Speaking*. Boston: Expression Company, 1913,  
2nd edition. 88 pp.

*Spoken Poetry in the Schools*. Boston: Expression Company,  
1913, 2nd edition. x + 116 pp.

*The Speech Chant*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1907. 146 pp.



class can be made into a choir or chorus for the speaking of poetry since no previous training is necessary. The objective for the study of poetry in the school are exactly those toward which choral speaking is directed and the best method of the former correlates with the methods of the latter, hence a combining of the two means little extra time and effort but produces better results. The greatest appeal choral speaking can make to the teacher is that it helps to break down the student's aversion for poetry by making learning an active rather than a passive process, by making vocalization incidental, by giving even the poorest a new insight into the beauties of poetry, and by making his poetic experience something he can share with others.

There is a possibility that choral speaking may come into disrepute through misuse by those who do not understand its purposes and values. Not every English teacher can use it in every class. The instructor must be sure that he understands its possibilities and must then use discrimination in its application. When used skillfully, it will result in lasting benefit to the choir members and the people who hear them.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abercrombie, Lascelles. The Theory of Poetry. London: Martin Secker, 1924. 223 pp.
- Bolenius, Emma Miller. Teaching Literature in the Grammar Grades and High School. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1929. 347 pp.
- Chilton, Eleanor Carroll, and Herbert Agar. The Garment of Praise: The Necessity of Poetry. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., 1929. 393 pp.
- Chapin, Elsa, and Russell Thomas. A New Approach to Poetry. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929. 189 pp.
- Corson, Hiram. An Essay on the Study of Literature and on Vocal Culture. Philadelphia: Charles Desilver, 1867. 48 pp.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Voice and Spiritual Education. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1904. 181 pp.
- de Banke, Cecile. The Art of Choral Speaking. Boston: Baker's Plays, 1937. 210 pp.
- De Witt, Marguerite, and others. Practical Methods in Choral Speaking. Boston: Expression Company, 1936. 253 pp.
- Drew, Elizabeth. Discovering Poetry. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1933. 210 pp.
- Fairchild, Arthur H. R. The Teaching of Poetry in the High School. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1914. 183 pp.
- Fogerty, Elsie. The Speaking of English Verse. London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1923. 254 pp.
- Fullington, James F. "Versification in the High School." English Journal, H. S. edition, XX (June, 1931), pp. 479-85.
- Gullan, Marjorie. Choral Speaking. Boston: Expression Company, 1933, 2nd edition. 86 pp.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Spoken Poetry in the Schools. Boston: Expression Company, 1926, 6th edition. x + 116 pp.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Speech Choir. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1937. 275 pp.







Gullen, Marjorie, and Percival Gurrey. Poetry Speaking for Children Part I (The Beginnings). Boston: Expression Company, 1937, 4th edition. 82 pp.

\_\_\_\_\_. Poetry Speaking for Children Part II (Marching Forward). Boston: Expression Company, 1932, 2nd edition. 150 pp.

Gummere, Francis B. The Beginnings of Poetry. New York: Macmillan Company, 1908. 473 pp.

Horn, John Louis. "The Speech Chorus: An Exercise in General Esthetics." English Journal, H. S. and Col. edition, XIX (June, 1930), pp. 478-81.

"Is Choric Reading a Fad?" (an editorial) English Journal, XXV (March, 1936), pp. 242-43.

Keppie, Elizabeth E. The Teaching of Choric Speech. Boston: Expression Company, 1932. 150 pp.

Lanier, Sidney. The Science of English Verse. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898. xv + 315 pp.

Morrison, Henry C. The Practice of Teaching in the Secondary School. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926. 661 pp.

Nichols, Wallace B. The Speaking of Poetry. Boston: Expression Company, 1937. 110 pp.

Overstreet, H. A. A Guide to Civilized Loafing. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1934. pp. 49-51.

Parker, Karla V. "Choirs That Do Not Sing." Christian Science Monitor, XXVI (August 14, 1934).

Raubicheck, Letitia. Teaching Speech in Secondary Schools. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1935. pp. 83-107.

Robinson, Marion P., and Rozetta L. Thurston. Poetry Arranged for the Speaking Choir. Boston: Expression Company, 1936. 379 pp.

Seely, Howard Francis. Enjoying Poetry in School. New York: Johnson Publishing Company, 1931. xv + 260 pp.

Smith, George Adam. The Early Poetry of Israel in its Physical and Social Origins. The Schweich Lectures, 1910. Oxford University Press, 1927.

Stratton, Clarence. The Teaching of English in the High School. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1923. 383 pp.



Allen, Marjorie, and Percival Curvey. Poetry Speaking for Children. Part I (The Beginnings). Boston: Expression Company, 1937. 4th edition. 63 pp.

Allen, Marjorie, and Percival Curvey. Poetry Speaking for Children. Part II (The Growing Forward). Boston: Expression Company, 1937. 2nd edition. 160 pp.

Armstrong, Francis B. The Beginnings of Poetry. New York: Macmillan Company, 1908. 472 pp.

Born, John Louis. "The Speech Chorus: An Exercise in General Education." English Journal, 8. 3. and Col. edition. XIX (June, 1930), pp. 478-81.

"Is Chorus Reading a 'fad'?" (an editorial). English Journal, XIV (March, 1933), pp. 243-45.

Caplan, Elizabeth B. The Teaching of Chorus Speech. Boston: Expression Company, 1932. 130 pp.

Canby, Henry. The Poetics of English Verse. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908. iv + 318 pp.

Carlson, Henry C. The Practice of Teaching in the Secondary School. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926. 681 pp.

Chubb, William B. The Speaking of Poetry. Boston: Expression Company, 1937. 110 pp.

Overstreet, H. A. A Guide to Civilized Reading. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1934. pp. 49-51.

Farber, Felix V. "Chorus That Do Not Sing." Carleton Review (Montreal, XXXI (Spring 1934)).

Henderson, Carlisle. Secondary Speech in Secondary Schools. New York: Macmillan-McMillan, Inc., 1933. pp. 83-107.

Robinson, Marion E., and Robert L. Thompson. Poetry Speaking for the Speaking Chorus. Boston: Expression Company, 1936. 370 pp.

Seely, Lewis Francis. Enjoying Poetry in School. New York: Johnson Publishing Company, 1931. xv + 260 pp.

Salt, George Adam. The Early Poetry of Israel in its Physical and Social Setting. The Sonnet Lecture, 1919. Oxford University Press, 1937.

Stratton, Clarence. The Teaching of English in the High School. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1928. 330 pp.



Swann, Mona. An Approach to Choral Speech. Boston: Expression Company, 1934. 90 pp.

Untermeyer, Louis, and Carter Davidson. Poetry: Its Appreciation and Enjoyment. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1934. 490 pp.

Arvey, Louise, and Grace Snow. Choral Speaking Arrangements for the Lower Grades. Boston: Expression Company, 1937. 84 pp.

\_\_\_\_\_. Choral Speaking Arrangements for the Upper Grades. Boston: Expression Company, 1937. 118 pp.

Arvey, Louise. Choral Speaking Arrangements for Junior High Schools. Boston: Expression Company. (In preparation)

\_\_\_\_\_. Choral Speaking Arrangements for High Schools. Boston: Expression Company. (In preparation)

Beckwith, Gordon. The Life of Saint Peter. London: Constable & Company, 1921.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1912 Plays. New York: Macmillan Company.

\_\_\_\_\_. Plays and Plays. London: Constable & Company, 1922.

Chase, W. Arthur. A Program of Speech Founded on a Democracy. (Section IX) Boston: Expression Company, 1937. 40 pp.

Choral Speaking Study #1. (unpaginated) U. W. Corp., 8th edition, revised. University of Wisconsin, 1935.

de Laure, Jessie. The Art of Choral Speaking. Boston: Baker's Plays, 1937. 218 pp.

De Witt, Margaret E. Speech Facilitation with Grock Movement. Boston: Expression Company, 1934. 30 pp.

\_\_\_\_\_. Let Us Recite Together. Boston: Expression Company, 1938. 94 pp.

\_\_\_\_\_. Lines for Fun. Boston: Expression Company, 1934. 16 pp.

\_\_\_\_\_. and others. Practical Methods in Choral Speaking. Boston: Expression Company, 1936. 282 pp.

Dyer, Alfred, and Harry Robinson. A Commentary on Prose and Verse Speaking. London: George Harrap and Company, 1913.

Ellis, T. S. Order in the Cathedral. Boston: Daughters of the Holy Spirit Company.



Swann, John. An Answer to General Besset. Boston: Association  
Company, 1834. 30 pp.

Untermyer, Julia, and Walter Davidson. Poetry: The Association  
and Enjoyment. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1834.  
430 pp.



## COMPREHENSIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY ON CHORAL SPEAKING

### Books

- Abney, Louise, and Grace Rowe. Choral Speaking Arrangements for the Lower Grades. Boston: Expression Company, 1937. 80 pp.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Choral Speaking Arrangements for the Upper Grades. Boston: Expression Company, 1937. 116 pp.
- Abney, Louise. Choral Speaking Arrangements for Junior High Schools. Boston: Expression Company. (In preparation)
- \_\_\_\_\_. Choral Speaking Arrangements for High Schools. Boston: Expression Company. (In preparation)
- Bottomley, Gordon. The Acts of Saint Peter. London: Constable & Company, Ltd.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Lyric Plays. New York: Macmillan Company.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Scenes and Plays. London: Constable & Company, Ltd.
- Cable, W. Arthur. A Program of Speech Education in a Democracy. (Section IX) Boston: Expression Company, 1932. 40 pp.
- Choral Speaking Study Aid. (mimeographed) G. M. Corp., 5th edition, revised. University of Wisconsin, 1938.
- de Banke, Cecile. The Art of Choral Speaking. Boston: Baker's Plays, 1937. 210 pp.
- De Witt, Marguerite E. Choric Recitation with Group Movement. Boston: Expression Company, 1936. 30 pp.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Let Us Recite Together. Boston: Expression Company, 1935. 26 pp.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Lilts for Fun. Boston: Expression Company, 1934. 18 pp.
- \_\_\_\_\_. and others. Practical Methods in Choral Speaking. Boston: Expression Company, 1936. 253 pp.
- Drew, Alfred, and Barry Robinson. A Commentary on Prose and Verse Speaking. London: George Harrap and Company, 1929.
- Eliot, T. S. Murder in the Cathedral. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.







- Enfield, Gertrude. Verse Choir Values and Technique. Boston: Expression Company, 1937. 118 pp.
- Fiske, Vocha. Group Verse Speaking. Boston: Expression Company, 1937. 59 pp.
- Gullan, Marjorie. Choral Speaking. Boston: Expression Company, 1933. 2nd edition. 86 pp.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Speech Choir. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1937. 275 pp.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Speech Training in the School. Boston: Expression Company, 1928. 59 pp.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Spoken Poetry in the Schools. Boston: Expression Company, 1926. 6th edition. x + 116 pp.
- Gullan, Marjorie, and Percival Gurrey, general editors. Poetry Speaking Anthologies. Compiled and edited by Hilda Adams and Anne Croasdel. Book I (for kindergarten, grades 1-3). Boston: Expression Company, 1937. 44 pp.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Poetry Speaking Anthologies. Book II (for grades 4-8). Boston: Expression Company, 1937. 95 pp.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Poetry Speaking Anthologies. Book III (for high schools and adults). Boston: Expression Company, 1937. 168 pp.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Poetry Speaking Anthology for Choir Use. (above 3 books). Boston: Expression Company, 1937. 307 pp.
- Gullan, Marjorie, and Percival Gurrey. Poetry Speaking for Children Part I (The Beginnings). Boston: Expression Company, 1937. 4th edition. 82 pp.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Poetry Speaking for Children Part II (Marching Forward). Boston: Expression Company, 1932, 2nd edition. 150 pp.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Poetry Speaking for Children Part III (Senior Work). Boston: Expression Company. 241 pp.
- Hamm, Agnes Curren, compiler. Selections for Choral Speaking. Boston: Expression Company, 1935. 115 pp.
- Keefe, Mildred Jones. Choric Interludes. Boston: Expression Company. (in preparation)
- \_\_\_\_\_, compiler. Festival Programs in Choric Speech (Christmas and Easter). (advertising booklet) Boston: Expression Company. 28 pp.
- Keppie, Elizabeth E. The Teaching of Choric Speech. Boston: Expression Company, 1932. 150 pp.



Emfield, Lawrence. Verse Choir Values and Techniques. Boston: Expression Company, 1937. 118 pp.

Wicks, Vernon. Verse Verse Speaking. Boston: Expression Company, 1937. 68 pp.

Allen, Charles. Choral Speaking. Boston: Expression Company, 1933. 2nd edition. 88 pp.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Speech Choir. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1937. 278 pp.

\_\_\_\_\_. Speech Training in the School. Boston: Expression Company, 1938. 68 pp.

\_\_\_\_\_. Speech Poetry in the Schools. Boston: Expression Company, 1938. 6th edition. 118 pp.

Allen, Charles, and Loretta Murray. Choral Speaking: Poetry Speaking and Anthologies. Compiled and edited by Allen Adams and Loretta Murray. Book I (for kindergarten, grades 1-3). Boston: Expression Company, 1937. 44 pp.

\_\_\_\_\_. Choral Speaking Anthologies: Book II (for grades 4-8). Boston: Expression Company, 1937. 44 pp.

\_\_\_\_\_. Poetry Speaking Anthologies: Book III (for high schools and adults). Boston: Expression Company, 1937. 168 pp.

\_\_\_\_\_. Poetry Speaking Anthology for Choirs (above 8 books). Boston: Expression Company, 1937. 304 pp.

Allen, Charles, and Loretta Murray. Poetry Speaking for Children: Part I (The Beginnings). Boston: Expression Company, 1937. 4th edition. 88 pp.

\_\_\_\_\_. Poetry Speaking for Children: Part II (The Beginning Forward). Boston: Expression Company, 1937. 2nd edition. 120 pp.

\_\_\_\_\_. Poetry Speaking for Children: Part III (The Forward Book). Boston: Expression Company, 1937. 211 pp.

Allen, Charles, and Loretta Murray. Selections for Choral Speaking. Boston: Expression Company, 1938. 118 pp.

Keefe, Albert James. Choral Speaking. Boston: Expression Company, (in preparation)

\_\_\_\_\_. Choral Speaking: Anthology. Boston: Expression Company, 1938. 88 pp.

Keefe, Albert James. The Speaking of Choral Speaking. Boston: Expression Company, 1938. 120 pp.



- Newton, Muriel B. The Unit Plan for Choral Reading. Boston: Expression Company, 1938. 210 pp.
- Nichols, Wallace B. The Speaking of Poetry. Boston: Expression Company, 1937. 110 pp.
- Overstreet, H. A. A Guide to Civilized Loafing. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1934. pp. 49-51.
- Raines, Lester C. Choric Speech as a Means of Teaching Good Speech. (mimeographed) Las Vegas, N. Mex.: New Mexico Normal University, 1935.
- Raubicheck, Letitia. Teaching Speech in Secondary Schools. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1935. pp. 83-107.
- Robinson, Marion Parsons, and R. L. Thurston. Poetry Arranged for the Speaking Choir. Boston: Expression Company, 1936. 405 pp.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Poetry for Men to Speak Chorally. Boston: Expression Company, 1939. 125 pp.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Poetry for Women to Speak Chorally. Boston: Expression Company, 1939. 125 pp.
- Smith, Marguerite. Wings to Fly. Boston: Expression Company, 1938. 135 pp.
- Stevens, F. A. Choral Speaking for the Use of Schools, Institutes, Clubs, Societies, or Groups Beginning Choral Speaking. Boston: Expression Company, 1937. 81 pp.
- Sutton, Vida Ravenscroft. Seeing and Hearing America. Boston: Expression Company, 1936. 111 pp.
- Swann, Mona. An Approach to Choral Speech. Boston: Expression Company, 1934. 90 pp.
- \_\_\_\_\_. At the Well of Bethlehem. Boston: Expression Company, 1930. 36 pp.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Jerusalem. Boston: Expression Company, 1933. 63 pp.
- \_\_\_\_\_, editor. Many Voices: Collection of Poems Suitable for Choral Speech Book I. Boston: Expression Company, 1934. 85 pp.
- \_\_\_\_\_, editor. Many Voices Book II. Boston: Expression Company, 1934. 250 pp.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Revolving Year. Boston: Expression Company, 1935. 61 pp.



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY

REPORT OF THE

COMMISSIONERS OF THE

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

FOR THE YEAR

ENDING

JUNE 30, 1900

CHICAGO, ILL.

1901

PRINTED BY

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

CHICAGO, ILL.

1901

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY

REPORT OF THE



. Wonderful World: Nine Choric Plays for the Very Young Made from Old Legends. Boston: Expression Company, 63 pp.

Talhoff, A. Totenmall--Call of the Dead. Boston: Expression Company, 1937. 27 pp.

Vallance, Rosaline. Plays in Verse and Mime. New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1936.

"The Dangers of Choral Speaking." Good Speech, I (January-March, 1931), p. 57.

"Teaching Choral Speaking." Good Speech, VI (January-March, 1936), pp. 70-83.

"An open letter to Choirs." Good Speech, VI (October-December, 1936).

"A Festival of Choral Speaking." Good Speech, XII (April-June, 1932), pp. 14-18.

Armstrong, W. E. "Certain Aspects of Choral Speech." Quarterly Journal of Speech, XIII (February, 1928), pp. 117-18.

Adams, E. E. "Choral Speaking: Additional Aspects." High School, II (March, 1933), pp. 24-4.

"Choral Speaking in Action." High School, XI (June, 1932), pp. 31-4.

Widwell, M., and Ethel Woods. "Choral Verse in Secondary Schools." Good Speech, XI (April-June, 1931), p. 17.

Slater, Elsie. "The Verse Speaking Tools of Berlin University." Good Speech, V (October-December, 1935), pp. 33-34.

Hayes, L. "Learning to Speak and Enjoy Poetry: The Robert Oxford Movement." Times Educational Supplement, XXVII (December 1, 1934), p. 401.

Scott, E. F. P. "Verse Speaking in English Classes of English Senior High School." Clearing House, XI (February, 1937), pp. 442-44.

Levinson, Marion. "Choric Speech and the Stage." Theater Arts Monthly, XII (July, 1934), pp. 120-24.

"Notes on Choral Speech." Times Educational Supplement, XXXI (March 5, 1938), p. 73.

Cardwell, Margaret E. "Choral Speech in the English Class." English Teacher, XXIII (March, 1934), pp. 37-43.



88  
Wonderful World: Nine Girls Have for the Very First Time  
from Old Legends. Boston: Emerson Company, 1914.

Trinity, A. Tolson--Call of the Heart. Boston: Emerson Com-  
pany, 1917. 14 pp.

William, Rosaline. Plays in Verse and Prose. New York: Thomas  
Nelson & Sons, 1915.



Papers and Articles

Abney, Louise. "Art of Choral Speaking." National Elementary Principles, XVII (July, 1938), pp. 363-66.

Abraham, Evelyn K. "Advice of a Choral Conductor." Good Speech, III (January-March, 1933), p. 49.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Dangers of Choral Speaking." Good Speech, V (January-March, 1935), p. 67.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Teaching Choral Speaking." Good Speech, VI (January-March, 1936), pp. 78-83.

"An Open Letter to Choirs." Good Speech, VI (October-December, 1936).

"A Recital of Choral Speaking." Good Speech, III (April-June, 1933), pp. 14-16.

Armstrong, M. H. "Certain Aspects of Choral Speech." Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXIV (February, 1938), pp. 117-19.

Bauman, S. S. "Choral Speaking: Additional Aspects." High Points, XX (March, 1938), pp. 9-14.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Choral Speaking in Action." High Points, XX (June, 1938), pp. 51-54.

Bidwell, M., and Ethel Woods. "Choral Verse in Secondary Schools." Good Speech, II (April-June, 1932), p. 17.

Binder, Hilde. "The Verse Speaking Choir of Berlin University." Good Speech, V (October-December, 1935), pp. 53-54.

Binyon, L. "Learning to Speak and Enjoy Poetry; the Latest Oxford Movement." Times Educational Supplement, MXXII (December 1, 1934), p. 401.

Boots, M. F. F. "Verse Speaking in English Classes of Pipkin Junior High School." Clearing House, XI (February, 1937), pp. 342-44.

Bottomley, Gordon. "Choric Speech and the Stage." Theater Arts Monthly, XIX (July, 1935), pp. 530-34.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Notes on Choric Speech." Times Educational Supplement, MXXXVI (March 9, 1935), p. 73.

Burdsall, Marjorie E. "Choral Speech in the English Class." English Leaflet, XXXIII (March, 1934), pp. 33-43.



Reports and Articles

- Abbey, Louise. "Art of Choral Speaking." National Elementary Principals, XVII (July, 1938), pp. 555-56.
- Abraham, Evelyn E. "Advice of a Choral Conductor." Good Speech, III (January-March, 1938), p. 49.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Language of Choral Speaking." Good Speech, V (January-March, 1938), p. 37.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Teaching Choral Speaking." Good Speech, VI (January-March, 1938), pp. 78-83.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "An Open Letter to Chorus." Good Speech, VI (October-December, 1938), pp. 14-18.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "A Festival of Choral Speaking." Good Speech, VII (April-June, 1938), pp. 14-18.
- Armstrong, M. E. "Certain Aspects of Choral Speech." Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXIV (February, 1938), pp. 117-18.
- Barnes, S. G. "Choral Speaking: Additional Aspects." High Points, XI (March, 1938), pp. 9-11.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Choral Speaking in Action." High Points, XI (June, 1938), pp. 41-43.
- Bidwell, W., and Ethel Woods. "Choral Verse in Secondary Schools." Good Speech, II (April-June, 1938), p. 17.
- Binder, Hilda. "The Verse Speaking Choir of Berlin University." Good Speech, V (October-December, 1938), pp. 63-64.
- Brown, L. "Learning to Speak and Enjoy Poetry: the latest Oxford Movement." Times Educational Supplement, LXXII (December 1, 1934), p. 491.
- Boots, A. F. V. "Verse Speaking in English Classes of High Junior High School." Elementary Home, XI (February, 1937), pp. 348-49.
- Bostwick, Gordon. "Choral Speech and the Stage." Theater Arts Monthly, XIX (July, 1938), pp. 250-52.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Notes on Choral Speech." Times Educational Supplement, LXXVI (June 8, 1938), p. 73.
- Burton, Melville E. "Choral Speech in the English Class." English Teacher, LXXIII (March, 1934), pp. 33-37.



- Compton, J. "Modern Verse-Speaking." (in Conference of Educational Associations Report of the twenty-third annual conference, 1935, p. 101.)
- Crawford, M. M. "Speech Choirs in Europe." Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXIII (October, 1937), pp. 444-49.
- Cross, Henry A. "Verse-Speaking Choir." Sierra Education News, XXXI (October, 1935), p. 41.
- Cruise, Pearl G. "Choral Speech, a Noteworthy Innovation in Training in English." Grade Teacher, LII (February, 1935), p. 14.
- De Witt, Marguerite E. "Speaking Choirs." The Witness, September, 1935.
- Doelker, Charles H. "Improving Children's Voices." Grade Teacher, LII (March, 1935), p. 20.
- Downs, Sophie. "Speech Chorus Work in the Elementary Schools of Germany." Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXII (December, 1936), pp. 669-70.
- Doyle, F. A. "Significance of Choral Speaking." (in Pennsylvania University School of Education Educational Programs for Today and Tomorrow, pp. 470-73.
- Elliott, B. "Verse Festivals." Ohio School, XI (October, 1933), p. 216.
- Enfield, Gertrude. "Verse-Speaking Choir." National Elementary Principles, XIV (July, 1935), pp. 367-69.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Verse Speaking Grows in the United States." National Elementary Principles, XVI (February, 1937), p. 102.
- Gade, M., and E. R. Taylor. "Choral Speaking at Christmas Time." American Childhood, XXIV (December, 1938), p. 22.
- Galbraith, E. E. "A Note on Three Choral Readings." Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXII (December, 1936), pp. 648-51.
- Gibson, E. "Choral Speaking." Wisconsin Journal of Education, LXIX (January, 1937), pp. 235-36.
- Gough, H. B., and others. "Choric Speaking, New Name for an Ancient and Pleasurable Art." Scholastic, XXXII (April 2, 1938), pp. 17E-PE.
- Gray, Lilian. "Plan for a Speaking Choir." Elementary English Review, X (January, 1933), pp. 19-20.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Value of Speaking Choir to Children in the Primary Grades." Theater and School, IX (April, 1931), p. 3, and XI (February, 1933), pp. 16-18.



Compton, J. "Modern Verse-Speaking." (in Conference of Educational Association Report of the twenty-third annual conference, 1933, p. 101.)

Gratford, W. M. "Speech Chorus in Europe." Quarterly Journal of Speech, XLIII (October, 1937), pp. 444-45.

Gross, Henry A. "Verse-Speaking Chorus." State Education News, XXXI (October, 1935), p. 41.

Gruba, Pearl B. "Choral Speech, a noteworthy innovation in training in English." Grade Teacher, LII (February, 1935), p. 14.

De Witt, Margaret E. "Speaking Chorus." The Witness, September, 1935.

DeWitt, Charles H. "Improving Children's Voices." Grade Teacher, LII (March, 1935), p. 27.

Dowse, Joseph. "Speech Chorus work in the elementary schools of Germany." Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXII (December, 1936), pp. 682-70.

Duffy, F. A. "Stimulants of Choral Speaking." (in Pennsylvania University School of Education Educational Program for Today and Tomorrow, pp. 470-75.

Elliot, S. "Verse Festivals." Ohio School, LI (October, 1933), p. 218.

Ellis, Arthur. "Verse-speaking Chorus." National Elementary Principals, XIV (July, 1933), pp. 307-22.

"Verse speaking grows in the United States." National Elementary Principals, XVI (February, 1937), p. 102.

Gale, E., and E. E. Taylor. "Choral Speaking at Christmas Time." American Childhood, XXIV (December, 1934), p. 32.

Galbraith, E. J. "A Note on Three Choral Readings." Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXII (December, 1936), pp. 648-51.

Gibson, E. "Choral Speaking." Wisconsin Journal of Education, LXIX (January, 1937), pp. 235-38.

Gough, H. E., and others. "Choral Speaking, New Name for an Ancient and Pleasurable Art." Scholastic, XXXI (April 2, 1935), pp. 175-78.

Gray, William. "Plan for a Speaking Chorus." Elementary English Review, X (January, 1933), pp. 12-20.

"Value of Speaking Chorus to Children in the Primary Grades." Teacher and School, LX (April, 1931), p. 3, and XI (January, 1933), pp. 12-13.



Gullan, Marjorie. "A Recital of Choral Speaking." Theater and School, XI (February, 1933), pp. 3-6.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Mass Recitation." Good Speech, IV (April-June, 1935), pp. 1-4.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Verse-Speaking Choirs." Theater and School, VII (March, 1929), p. 18.

Haberbasch, J. F. "Dramatization of a Speech Recital." School Activities, X (October, 1938), pp. 63-65.

Hinsdale, William P. "The Verse-Speaking Choir." Theater and School, IX (April, 1931), p. 3.

Horn, John Louis. "The Speech Chorus: An Exercise in General Esthetics." The English Journal, H. S. edition, XIX (June, 1930), pp. 478-81.

Horner, Zelda. "Observation and Preliminary Investigation of Choral Speaking." High Points, XVIII (May, 1936), pp. 18-25.

"Is Choric Reading a Fad?" (an editorial) English Journal, XXV (March, 1936), pp. 242-43.

Jenks, Elizabeth M. "Comment on Poems Suitable for Verse-Speaking Choir." Theater and School, IX (April, 1931), p. 18.

Kangley, Lucy. "An Approach to Poetry Appreciation." English Journal, XXVI (March, 1937), pp. 217-24.

Kaucher, Dorothy. "Et tu Brute." Theater and School, IX (April, 1931), p. 18.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Verse-Speaking Choir." Quarterly Journal of Speech, XVII (February, 1931), pp. 64-73.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Verse-Speaking Choir of San Jose State Teachers College." The Journal of Expression, June, 1931.

Keppie, Elizabeth E. "Choral Speech and Choral Contests." Emerson Quarterly, XI (January, 1931),

\_\_\_\_\_. "Material for Choral Speaking." Christian Science Monitor, XXVII (August 13, 20, 27, September 3, 10, 17, 1935).

\_\_\_\_\_. "Stanza Patterns in Choral Speech." Emerson Quarterly, XV (May, 1935), pp. 13-14.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Verse-Speaking Choir." Southern California Journal of Speech, III (December, 1932), pp. 28-32.

Kerby, Gertrude N. "The Development of Choral Speaking in Great Britain." Good Speech, V (April-June, 1935), pp. 5-8.



- William, Marjorie. "A Festival of Choral Speaking." Theater and School, XI (February, 1953), pp. 3-6.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Lessons in Choral Speaking." Good Speech, IV (April-June, 1953), pp. 1-4.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Verse-Speaking Chorus." Theater and School, VII (March, 1953), p. 18.
- Heberbach, L. E. "Presentation of a Speech Festival." School Activities, 2 (October, 1953), pp. 53-55.
- Hussalo, William R. "The Verse-Speaking Chorus." Theater and School, IX (April, 1951), p. 3.
- Jorn, John Lewis. "The Speech Chorus: An Analysis in General Education." The English Journal, 42 (April, 1953), pp. 478-81.
- Korner, John. "Observation and Preliminary Investigation of Choral Speaking." High Points, XVII (May, 1953), pp. 18-25.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Chorus Speaking a Poem" (an editorial). English Journal, LXV (March, 1953), pp. 242-43.
- Lozier, Elizabeth M. "Comment on Poems Suitable for Verse-Speaking Chorus." Theater and School, IX (April, 1951), p. 18.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "An Approach to Poetry Appreciation." English Journal, LXVI (March, 1957), pp. 217-24.
- Rebner, George. "30 to 40." Theater and School, IX (April, 1951), p. 18.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Verse-Speaking Chorus." Quarterly Journal of Speech, XVII (February, 1951), pp. 54-73.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Verse-Speaking Chorus of San Jose State Teachers College." The Journal of Education, June, 1951.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Elizabeth M. "Choral Speech and Choral Speaking." Personality, XI (January, 1951).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Festival for Choral Speaking." Christian Science Monitor, XVII (August 15, 22, 29, September 5, 12, 19, 1953).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Speech Patterns in Choral Speaking." Personality, VII (May, 1951), pp. 11-12.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Verse-Speaking Chorus." Southern California Journal of Education, III (December, 1953), pp. 28-33.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Development of Choral Speaking in Great Britain." Good Speech, V (April-June, 1953), pp. 3-6.



Kuhns, Rosalia S. "Verse-Speaking at Oxford." Emerson Quarterly, XI (January, 1931) and VIII (May, 1928).

Laming, E. "Verse-Speaking in a Boys' Preparatory School," New Era, XVI (December, 1935), pp. 304-05.

Lewis, R. B., and H. deW. Roberts. "Foundation of the School Verse-Speaking Choir." California Journal of Secondary Education, XI (February, 1936), pp. 98-100.

Lindsay, G. L. "Relation of Choral Speech and Song." (In Pennsylvania University School of Education Educational Programs for Today and Tomorrow, pp. 473-75.)

Loar, Grace. "A Verse Speaking Choir in High School." English Journal, H. S. and Col. edition, XXI (November, 1932), pp. 710-15.

Longenecker, Nancy. "The Art of Choral Speech." International Journal of Religious Education, X (May, 1934), pp. 19-20.

Lorberg, Aileen D. "Choral Verse Speaking an Effective Approach to the Appreciation of Poetry." Grade Teacher, LIV (May, 1937), p. 14.

Lyne, D. J. "Choral Verse Speaking Choir." English Journal, H. S. edition, XXVI (May, 1937), pp. 399-401.

MacTavish, F. "Choral Reading in the Junior Grades." School, elementary edition, XXVI (October, 1937), pp. 131-34.

Manheim, L. F. "Choral Recitation and Its Possible Use in Integration." High Points, XVIII (December, 1936), pp. 51-54.

Marble, Anna T. "An Experiment in Choral Verse Reading." English Journal, H. S. edition, XXVI (September, 1937), pp. 577-78.

McConnel, H. "Lakeview Pupils Experience Literature Through a Verse Choir." Clearing House, XII (March, 1938), pp. 427-29.

McLane, Lucy M. "Sound Values of 'The Cloud'." The Quarterly Journal of Speech, XIX (April, 1933), pp. 224-27.

McLaughlin, S. "Choral Speaking." California Journal of Elementary Education, VI (May, 1938), pp. 241-47.

Meador, Emma Grant. "Choral Speaking and its Values." Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXII (April, 1936), pp. 235-45.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Sound and Rhythm in the Speech of Children." Quarterly Journal of Speech, XX (April, 1934), pp. 275-79.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Teaching of Speech in the Elementary School." (A thesis) Columbia University.



Knapp, Kenneth S. "Verse-Speaking at Oxford." Western Quarterly, XI (January, 1931) and VII (May, 1933).

Lewis, R. B. "Verse-Speaking in a Boys' Preparatory School." New Era, XVI (December, 1933), pp. 304-05.

Lewis, R. B., and A. J. Roberts. "Foundation of the School Verse-Speaking Choir." California Journal of Secondary Education, XI (February, 1933), pp. 88-100.

Madame, W. I. "Relation of Choral Speech and Song." (In Pennsylvania University School of Education Educational Programs for Today and Tomorrow, pp. 413-15.)

Port, Grace. "A Verse Speaking Choir in High School." English Journal, N. S. and Vol. Edition, XXI (November, 1932), pp. 110-12.

Wengert, Nancy. "The Art of Choral Speech." International Journal of Holistic Education, X (May, 1934), pp. 15-20.

Forster, Alison. "Choral Verse Speaking as Effective Approach to the Appreciation of Poetry." Grade Teacher, LIV (May, 1937), p. 14.

Lyne, B. J. "Choral Verse Speaking Choir." English Journal, N. S. Edition, XXVI (May, 1937), pp. 293-401.

Malvern, K. "Choral Speaking in the Junior Grades." School Element, early edition, XXVI (October, 1937), pp. 131-34.

Mathews, J. F. "Choral Recitation and Its Possible Use in Literature." High Point, XVII (December, 1936), pp. 61-62.

Smith, John T. "An Experiment in Choral Verse Reading." English Journal, N. S. Edition, XXVI (September, 1937), pp. 671-70.

Macdonald, R. "A Review of the Experience Literature Through a Verse Choir." Elementary School, XII (March, 1933), pp. 427-28.

Moore, Lucy S. "Sound Values of The Choir." The Quarterly Journal of Speech, XII (April, 1933), pp. 224-27.

McLaughlin, S. "Choral Speaking." California Journal of Secondary Education, VI (May, 1933), pp. 211-13.

Meader, E. M. "Choral Speaking and Its Values." Quarterly Journal of Speech, XII (April, 1933), pp. 223-24.

"Sound and Style in the Speech of Children." Quarterly Journal of Speech, XI (April, 1934), pp. 273-75.

"Teaching of Speech in the Elementary School." (A thesis) Columbia University.



Miller, M. L. "Sherrard Verse-Speaking Choir." Elementary English Review, X (November, 1933), pp. 226-28.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Verse Speaking Choir as a High School Activity." National Educational Association Proceedings, LXXV (1937), pp. 233-35.

Mills, Alice W. "Choral Speaking." School and Society, XLV (June 5, 1937), pp. 779-81.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Choral Speaking at Mt. Holyoke." Mount Holyoke Alumni Quarterly, (February, 1936), pp. 227-28.

Mills, S. G. "Choral Speaking." High Points, XVIII (November, 1936), pp. 69-73.

Mitchell, M. and L. Mitchell. "Dance Choir." Theater Arts Monthly, XXIII (January, 1939), pp. 72-75.

Mones, Leon. "Principles and Methods of Choral Recitation." English Journal, H. S. edition, XXVI (October, 1937), p. 656.

O'Neill, J. M. "Speech in the Changing Curriculum." Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXII (April, 1936), pp. 183-86.

Owen, M. G. "Verse Reading Choir--How to Create One." Minnesota Journal of Education, XVII (March, 1937), pp. 275-76.

Parker, Karla V. "Choirs That Do Not Sing." Christian Science Monitor, XXVI (August 14, 1934).

Pidge, F. E. "Choral Reading by Verse-Speaking Choirs." Elementary English Review, XIII (February, 1936), pp. 44-45.

Pomeroy, Elsie. "Choral Reading." The School, XX (December, 1931), pp. 320-23.

Price, Anna M. "Adventures in Verse-Speaking." Sierra Educational News, XXX (November, 1934), p. 28.

Putnam, K. S. "Choric Verse-Speaking." Overland News, XCI (November, 1933), p. 151.

Ramsey, E. "Verse-Speaking Choir for Children." Childhood Education, XII (February, 1936), pp. 201-05.

Rasmussen, Carrie. "Verse Speaking and Bodily Activity." Quarterly Journal of Speech, XX (April, 1934), pp. 282-86.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Choral Speaking for Children." Elementary English Review, X (November, 1933), pp. 223-25.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Choral Speaking in the Grades." Quarterly Journal of Speech, XIX (February, 1933), pp. 43-51.



- Miller, M. L. "General Versus-Speaking Choir." Elementary English Review, X (November, 1933), pp. 233-34.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Versus Speaking Choir as a High School Activity." National Educational Association Proceedings, LXXV (1933), pp. 323-24.
- Miller, Alice W. "General Speaking." School and Society, XIV (June 3, 1933), pp. 739-41.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "General Speaking at Mt. Holyoke." Mount Holyoke Alumni Quarterly, February, 1933, pp. 237-38.
- Miller, S. G. "Choral speaking." High Points, XVII (November, 1933), pp. 62-73.
- Nichols, M. and L. Mitchell. "Dance Choir." Theater Arts Monthly, XLIII (January, 1933), pp. 73-75.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Principles and Methods of General Education." English Journal, P. 2, edition, XCI (October, 1937), p. 688.
- O'Brien, J. G. "Speech in the Changing Curriculum." Quarterly Journal of Speech, XVII (April, 1932), pp. 153-55.
- Owen, W. G. "Versus Speaking Choir--How to Develop One." Minnesota Journal of Education, XVII (March, 1937), pp. 275-76.
- Parker, Louis W. "Choirs That Do Not Sing." Christian Science Monitor, XLVI (August 14, 1934).
- Pidge, F. L. "Choral Reading by Versus-Speaking Choirs." Elementary English Review, XIII (February, 1933), pp. 44-46.
- Pomeroy, Elsie. "Choral Reading." The School, XX (December, 1931), pp. 330-33.
- Price, Anna M. "Advantages in Versus-Speaking." Elementary English Review, XIX (November, 1933), p. 33.
- Putnam, E. S. "General Versus-Speaking." Overland News, XCI (November, 1933), p. 151.
- Ransom, E. "Versus-Speaking Choir for Children." California Education, XL (February, 1933), pp. 201-02.
- Rasmussen, Carrie. "Versus Speaking and Soliloquy Activity." Quarterly Journal of Speech, XX (April, 1934), pp. 282-85.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Choral Speaking for Children." Elementary English Review, X (November, 1933), pp. 233-34.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Choral Speaking in the Grades." Quarterly Journal of Speech, XII (February, 1933), pp. 43-51.



- Ray, Josephine H. "A Study of Choral Verse-Speaking." (Thesis) University of Southern California, 1931.
- Reynolds, G. F. "Concerted Reading." The Quarterly Journal of Speech, XVIII (November, 1932), pp. 659-61.
- Roberts, H. deW. "The Chanting of Poetry." English Journal, H. S. and Col. edition, XIX (January, 1930), pp. 76-77.
- \_\_\_\_\_, and R. B. Lewis. "Directors' Part in the Verse Speaking Choir." Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXIII (February, 1937), pp. 63-66.
- Robinson, Marion P., and R. L. Thurston. "Literature for Choral Speaking." Emerson Quarterly, XV (May, 1935), p. 12.
- Robinson, Marion P. "The Speaking Choir." Character, VI (November-December, 1935), pp. 22-23.
- Robbins, R. H. "Further Justification of Choral Speaking." Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXIV (October, 1938), pp. 437-42.
- Sanderson, Virginia. "Choirs That Speak." English Journal, H. S. and Col. edition, XX (June, 1931), pp. 462-69.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Choral Speaking." Quarterly Journal of Speech, XIX (June, 1933), pp. 421-24.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Verse-Speaking Choir." Progressive Education, VIII (January, 1931), pp. 88-91.
- Saunders, Mary Evans. "Oxford Verse-Speaking Contest." Quarterly Journal of Speech, XVII (June, 1931), pp. 395-400.
- Scanlan, M. E. "Poetry is Fun! A Diary." Chicago School Journal, XX (November, 1938), pp. 57-60.
- Shoemaker, D. A. "Choral Speaking." (In Pennsylvania University School of Education; Education for Dynamic Citizenship, pp. 405-08).
- Smith, Delia. "Choral Speaking in a Secondary School." Progressive Education, XII (October, 1935), pp. 399-402.
- Sonke, Dorothy E. "Verse Speaking Choir." Christian Science Monitor, XXVI (August 25, 1934 and October 13, 1934).
- Spitzer, M. R. "Value of a Verse-Speaking Choir." Virginia Journal of Education, XXXII (January, 1939), pp. 194-95.
- Swann, Mona. "Choral Speech." New Era, XVI (December, 1935), pp. 293-6.



Swann, John. "Choral Speech." How Art, XVI (December, 1933), pp. 282-4.

Spitzer, M. A. "Voice of a Verse-Speaking Choir." Journal of Education, XXXII (January, 1932), pp. 194-98.

Stone, Dorothy E. "Verse Speaking Choir." Christian Science Monitor, XLI (August 22, 1934 and October 12, 1934).

Thompson, D. A. "Choral Speaking." (In Pennsylvania University School of Education: Bulletin for Dynamic Citizenship, pp. 403-08).

Smith, Leslie. "Choral Speaking in a Secondary School." Progressive Education, XII (October, 1935), pp. 393-403.

Greenleaf, E. B. "Poetry is Fun! A Diary." Chicago School Journal, IX (November, 1933), pp. 37-40.

Greenleaf, Mary Evans. "A First Verse-Speaking Concert." Quarterly Journal of Speech, XVII (June, 1931), pp. 382-400.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Verse-Speaking Choir." Progressive Education, VIII (January, 1931), pp. 88-91.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Choral Speaking." Quarterly Journal of Speech, XIX (June, 1933), pp. 431-34.

Banderson, Virginia. "Choirs That Speak." English Journal, L. 8, and Col. edition, XX (June, 1931), pp. 433-39.

Kobbins, E. M. "Further Investigation of Choral Speaking." Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXIV (October, 1938), pp. 437-48.

Hobinson, Marion E. "The Speaking Choir." Language, VI (November-December, 1933), pp. 23-25.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Choral Speaking." Language Quarterly, XV (May, 1935), p. 12.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Literature for Choral Speaking." and R. B. Lewis. "Literature, Part in the Verse Speaking Choir." Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXII (February, 1937), pp. 63-66.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Changing of Poetry." English Journal, L. 8, and Col. edition, XIX (January, 1930), pp. 78-79.

Reynolds, C. E. "Connected Reading." The Quarterly Journal of Speech, XVIII (November, 1932), pp. 889-91.

Ray, Josephine B. "A Study of Choral Verse-Speaking." (Thesis) University of Southern California, 1931.



Tenney, G. "Choral English and Speech Work in Schools and Colleges." School and Home, XVIII (December, 1936), pp. 20-23.

Thurston, Rozetta. "Choric Speech as an Aid to Worship." (Thesis) University of Denver, 1934.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Speaking-Choir Returns to the Church." International Journal of Religious Education, XI (April, 1934), pp. 15-16.

Tuttle, Florence Piper. "For Wee Choric Speakers." The Christian Science Monitor, XXIX (November 6, 1937).

Voaden, H. A. "New Methods in Teaching Poetry." The School, XXI (December, 1932), pp. 330-36.

Walsh, Rose. "Whither the Verse-Speaking Choir." Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXI (November, 1935), pp. 461-66.

Wise, C. M. "Choral Speaking as an Instrument for Training in Drama." The Callboard of Alpha Psi Omega, April, 1933.

Wyatt, G. "What Can Be Done with Choric Readings?" Texas Outlook, XX (September, 1936), pp. 49-50.

Young, Helen H. "Why Choral Speaking?" Progressive Education, XII (October, 1935), pp. 396-98.







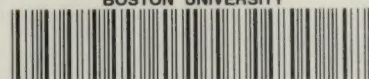
PARSONS  
FALCON BOND  
FIVE CONTENT







BOSTON UNIVERSITY



1 1719 02556 1830



